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COUSIN JACK AND THE CHILDREN.



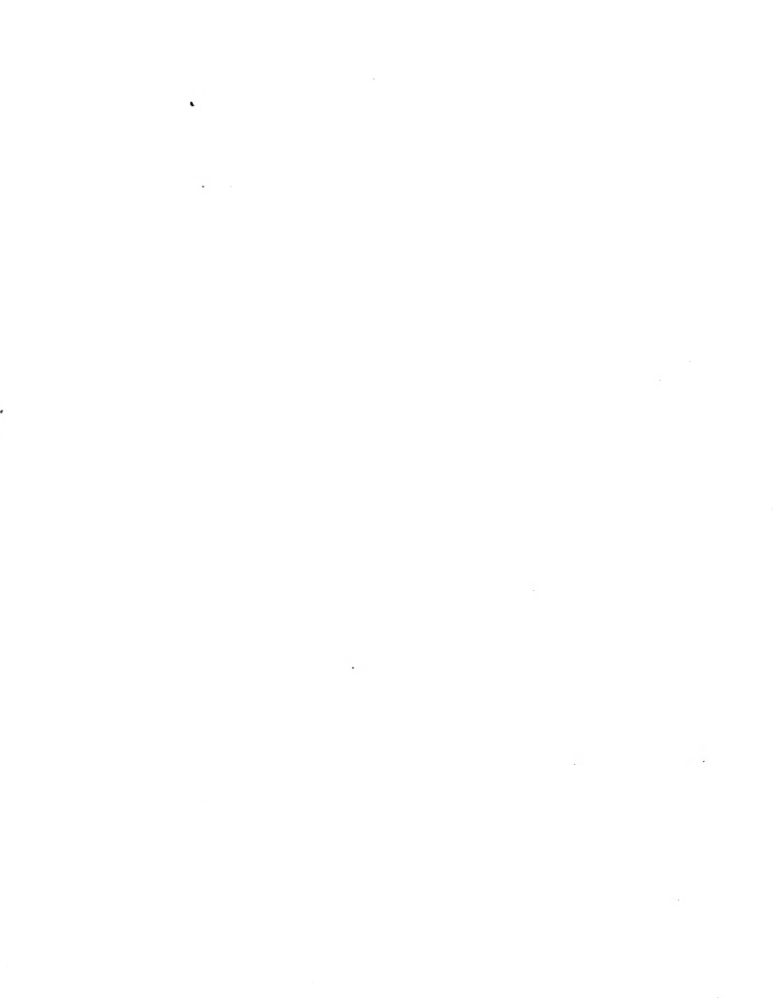
THE BUNNY STORIES.

By John H. Jewett.

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FOR LITTLE FOLK.

ILLUSTRATED BY CULMER BARNES.



THE BUNNY STORIES

For Young People



BY

JOHN HOWARD JEWETT

WITH SEVENTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BY

CULMER BARNES



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THE BUNNY STORIES.

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TO THE CHILDREN.

“Cuddledown” sends her love to all the children who may read her Bunny Stories.

Let me tell you a secret :—

There are two Cuddledowns. One is the youngest bunny-child of these stories, and the other is a real, live, story-loving little girl whose “truly name” is

SHEILA MACKENZIE JEWETT.

Only a few years ago, when this little girl was about five years old, there were two real, live, snowy-white, tame bunnies, and she loved them very dearly.

One morning there were no gentle bunny friends waiting for fresh clover leaves in the bunny-house on the lawn. A terrible accident had happened during the night.

To comfort the child for the loss of the dear, harmless pets, these stories of the happy, home-sheltered Bunny family of Runwild Terrace were told her, over and over again.

Long before the stories were printed in the *St. Nicholas*, they were written out in her own scrap-book, as a keepsake of “the good times we had together” when Sheila was a wee bit of a pet herself and was called “Cuddledown” by the real “Mother Bunny” and

THE AUTHOR.

Worcester, Mass., May, 1892.

JUVENILE.

THE BUNNY STORIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOME OF THE BUNNYS.

THE home of the Bunny family was once a sunny hillside, overrun with wild-rose bushes and berry-vines, with a little grove of white birches, pines, and other trees, on the north side, to shelter it from the cold winds of winter.

The place had no name of its own until the Bunnys and their neighbors found it out, and came there to live.

After that, it became much like any other thickly settled neighborhood, where all the families had children and all the children ran wild, and so they called it "Runwild Terrace."

This was a long time ago, when all the wild creatures talked with each other, and behaved very much as people do nowadays, and were for the most part kind and friendly to each other.

Their wisest and best teachers used to tell them, as ours



DEACON BUNNY.

tell us now, that they all belonged to one great family, and should live in peace like good brothers and sisters.

I am afraid, however, they sometimes forgot the relationship, just as we do when we are proud or greedy or ill-natured, and were sorry for it afterward.

The Bunnys of Runwild Terrace were very much like all the rest—plain, sensible, and well-bred folks.

The father and mother tried to set a good example by being quiet and neighborly, and because they were always kind to the poor and sick, they were called “Deacon Bunny” and “Mother Bunny” by their friends and neighbors.

The Bunny children were named Bunnyboy, who was the eldest, Brownny, his brother, and their sisters, Pinkeyes and Cuddledown; and their parents were anxious that the children should grow up to be healthy, honest, truthful, and good-natured.



MOTHER BUNNY.



BUNNYBOY.

him because he was a cripple, that he had got used to limping about, and did not mind being called "Lame Jack," by some of the thoughtless neighbors.

The Bunny family, however, always called him

They were a happy family, fond of each other, and of their Cousin Jack, who lived with them.

One of Cousin Jack's legs was shorter than the other, and he had to use a pair of crutches to help him walk or hop about, but he was very nimble on his "wooden legs," as he called them, and could beat most of the bunnies in a race on level ground.

He had been lame so long, and almost everyone was so kind to



BROWNNY.



PINKEYES.

“Cousin Jack,” which was a great deal better and kinder, because no one really likes to be reminded of a misfortune, or to wear a nickname, like a label on a bottle of medicine.

Cousin Jack was a jolly, good-natured fellow, and the bunnies all liked him



CUDDLEDOWN.

because he was so friendly and cheerful, and willing to make the best of everything that happened to go wrong.

If it rained and spoiled the croquet fun, or upset the plans for a picnic, Cousin Jack would say, "Well, well; I don't think it is going to be much of a flood; let us have a little home-made sunshine indoors until the shower is over."

Then he would help them make a boat, or a kite, and mend the broken toys, or tell them stories, until they would forget all about the disappointment, and say that a day with him was almost as good fun as a picnic.

Besides a pleasant home and many kind friends, these fortunate bunnies had no end of beautiful books, pretty toys, and games, and best of all, a loving, patient mother, to watch over them and care for them as only a mother can.

With so many things in their lives to help them to be good, they had no excuse for not growing up to be a comfort to the family and a credit to the neighborhood, and I think they did.

At any rate, they had lots of fun, and these stories about the mare told to show other little folks how the bunnies behaved, and what happened to them when they were good or naughty.

THE BUNNYS AT PLAY.

Ever since Bunnyboy and Brownny were old enough to dig in the dirt, they had made a little flower-garden every

year, in a sunny spot on the south side of the house. Pink-eyes used to watch her brothers taking care of the flower-beds, and soon learned to love the pretty grasses and leaves and buds and the smell of the freshly spaded earth, and one day she said she would like to have a flower-bed of her own.

It was almost winter, however, before she thought of it, and remembered that it takes time for plants to grow and blossom, and that the gardens in the north where she lived were covered with snow and ice in the winter.

When Pinkeyes wanted anything she wanted it in a hurry, and so she asked her father what flowers came earliest after the snow was gone.

He told her that of all the wild flowers, the fragrant pink and white arbutus was first to peep out from under the dead leaves and grass, to see if the spring had come.

Sometimes the buds were in such a hurry to get a breath of the mild spring air, and a glimpse of the sunshine, that a tardy snow-storm caught them with their little noses uncovered, and gave them a taste of snow-broth and ice, without cream, that made them chilly until the warm south winds and the sun had driven the snow away.

Pinkeyes said she wanted a whole garden of arbutus, but her father told her that this strange, shy wildling did not like gardens, but preferred to stay out in the fields, where it could have a whole hillside tangle or pasture to ramble

in, and plenty of thick grass and leaves to hide under when winter came again.

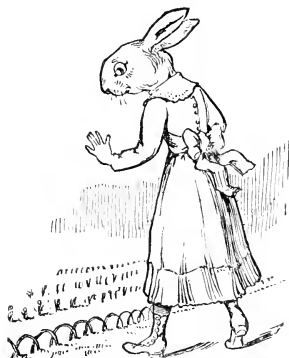
When her father saw how disappointed she was, he told her if she would try to be good-natured and patient when things went wrong, they would get some crocus-bulbs and put them in the ground before the frost came, and in the spring she would have a whole bed of white and yellow and purple crocuses, which were earlier even than the arbutus, if properly cared for.

Ever so many times in the winter, when the children were enjoying the snow and ice, Pinkeyes wondered what her crocus-bulbs were doing down under the ground, and if they would know when it was spring and time to come up.

After the snow was gone she watched every day for their

coming, and sure enough, one morning there were little rough places on the crocus bed, and the next day she found a row of delicate green shoots and tiny buds trying to push themselves up out of the ground.

Every day they grew bigger and prettier, and more of them came up, until there were enough to spare some of each color for a bouquet, without spoiling the



EVERY DAY THEY GREW BIGGER
AND PRETTIER.

pretty picture they made out of doors, where everybody who came that way could see and enjoy the flowers, and be sure that spring had really come.

The very first handful she picked was put into a bowl of water, and looked very fresh and dainty on the breakfast-table.

Pinkeyes felt quite proud of her first crocus-blossoms, and almost cried when her mother said that it would be a kind thing to do, to take them over to neighbor Woodchuck, whose children were sick and who had no crocus bed on their lawn to look at while they had to stay in the house to get well.

Pinkeyes thought it would be a good excuse for not doing so, to say she did not know the way; for she had never been so far away from home alone; but her father said he was going over that way and would take her with him, if she wished to carry the flowers to the tired mother and the sick children; and so they started off with the crocuses carefully wrapped in soft damp cotton to keep them fresh.

When Pinkeyes handed the flowers to Mrs. Woodchuck, she said: "Here is the first bunch of blossoms we have picked from my crocus bed, and my mother thought that you would like to have some to brighten the room while the children are sick, and we have plenty more at home."

The family were all delighted with the flowers and the

kind attention, for they had not seen anything so bright and cheery for a long time, and they all thanked Pinkeyes so heartily that she felt ashamed to remember how unwilling she had been at first to give the crocuses away.



PINKEYES HANDED THE FLOWERS TO MRS. WOODCHUCK.

When she came home she told her mother about the call, and how pleased they were with the simple gift; and her mother asked her how many crocuses she had left in the bed, and she said, "More than twenty."

Then her mother asked how many she had given away, and she said, "Only six," and Pinkeyes began to see what her mother meant, and that a little given away made one happier than a great deal kept all to one's self.

Then Pinkeyes went out and looked at those left growing in the bed, and whispered softly to them, "Now I know what flowers are made for." And all the little buds looked up at her as if to say, "Tell us, if you know"; and

so she whispered again the answer, "To teach selfish folks to be kind and generous, and to make sick folks glad."

Every day new buds opened, and Pinkeyes had a fresh bouquet each morning, and also enough to give away, until the other flower-beds which her brothers had planted began to bear blossoms for the summer.

Brownny took more interest in the flower-garden than Bunnyboy, who was older and liked to play circus, and croquet, and to watch base-ball games; and so Brownny began to take care of the flower-beds alone.

He liked to plant new seeds and watch them come up, and wait for the buds to open, but the hardest part of the work was to keep the neighbors' hens away from the lawn.

These hens seemed to think there was no place like a freshly made flower-bed to scratch holes to roll in; and when no one was looking they would walk right out of a large open corn-field, where there was more loose earth than they could possibly use, and begin to tear that flower-garden to pieces.

One old yellow hen, that was lazy and clumsy about everything else, would work herself tired, every time she could get in there, trying to bury herself in the soft loam of the garden.

Brownny's father, Deacon Bunny, told Brownny he might scare the hens away as often as they came, but must not

hurt them with clubs or stones, because they belonged to their good neighbor Coon.

Brownny thought it was strange that a good neighbor should keep such a mischievous hen as Old Yellow; but the Deacon said that people who kept hens in a crowded neighbor-



TRYING TO BURY HERSELF IN THE SOFT LOAM.

hood, and let them run at large, usually cared more about fresh eggs and other things to eat than for flowers, and as a rule, such people did not lie awake at night thinking about the trouble their hens gave other folks.

One day, when Brownny was complaining about the yellow hen, Bunnyboy came rushing in to ask his father to get a croquet set, and said their lawn was just the place for a good croquet ground.

The Deacon said at once that he thought it would be a good place, and if the neighbors' children would all turn out and enjoy the game with them, the plan Bunnyboy suggested might help to rid them of the daily hen-convention on the lawn, and save the flower-beds. The next day he brought the croquet set.

When the Bunnys opened their new croquet box, they



THE FIRST THING THEY DID WAS TO BEGIN QUARRELLING LUSTILY.

found four mallets and four balls, and nine arches and two stakes, all painted and striped with red, white, blue and yellow, to match each other.

The first thing they did was to begin quarrelling lustily about who should have the first choice, for each of the players preferred the blue ball and mallet.

When the Deacon heard the loud talking on the lawn, he came out, shut up the box and said the croquet exercises would not begin until they could behave themselves, and settle the question of the first choice like well-bred children, without any more wrangling.

Bunnyboy happened to remember that he was the oldest, and said the best way was to give the youngest the first choice and so on. The Deacon said that was all right, and that they were all old enough to learn how much happier it makes everyone feel to be yielding and generous, even in little things, than to be selfish and try to get one's own way in everything.

So they all agreed, and each bunny took a mallet and began a game, and they had rare fun knocking the balls about, trying to drive them through the arches without pushing them through, which was not fair play.

By and by Chivy Woodchuck and his brother Chub heard the clatter, and came over to see the fun, and wanted to play with them.

Then came the question, who should play, and who

should not, for all six could not play with but four mallets. Of course the visitors should have first place, and two of



CHIVY WOODCHUCK AND HIS BROTHER CHUB.

the Bunnys must give up their mallets and balls.

Bunnyboy tried to settle it by asking Pinkeyes and Cuddledown to go into the kitchen and tease the cook for some ginger cakes, while the others played a game. They liked this plan, and so the boys each had a mallet and the game went on

nicely, until Chivy Woodchuck knocked the red ball into the muddy gutter and the other side refused to go and get it. Then another dispute began.

Bunnyboy thought Chivy ought to get the ball, and Chivy said Bunnyboy ought to get it himself; and so, instead of keeping good-natured, they stood sulking and scolding until the other children came back.

When Cuddledown heard the talking, she went and picked up the muddy ball, wiped it on her dress, and brought it back to the lawn, just as the Deacon came out to see what the new quarrel was about.

Bunnyboy and Chivy were so ashamed of having made

such a fuss about doing a little thing that the youngest bunny could do in a minute without being asked, that they begged each other's pardon, and went on with the game.

Deacon Bunny told Cuddledown that she was a good child to get the ball and stop the dispute, and that she had begun early to be a little peace-maker; but the next time she had a muddy ball to clean she should wipe it on the grass instead of her dress, because it was easier for the rain to wash the grass than for busy mothers to keep their children clean and tidy.

All the summer they had jolly times with the croquet, but the old yellow hen did not like having so many little folks around, and had to hunt up a new place to scratch holes to roll herself in.

But Brownny had both a flower- and vegetable-garden next year, and the old yellow hen never troubled him any more.

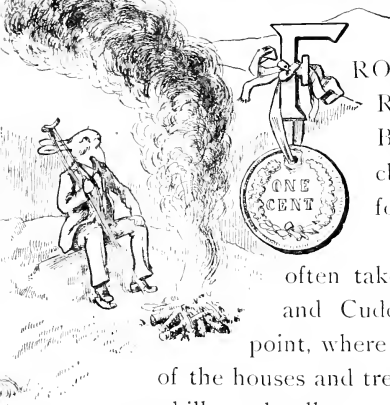


CUDDLEDOWN WENT AND PICKED UP THE MUDDY BALL

THE BUNNY FAMILY IN TROUBLE

CHAPTER II.

CUDDLEDOWN MISSING.



FROM the top of the hill behind Runwild Terrace, where the Bunny family lived, there was a charming view of all the country for miles around.

Bunnyboy and Brownie had often taken their little sisters, Pinkeyes and Cuddledown, to the very highest point, where they could look over the tops of the houses and trees on every side, and see more pretty hills and valleys and glistening rivers and ponds than they could count in a whole day.

Away off in the distance, farther than they had ever been in their lives, they could see where the blue sky seemed to come down to meet the ground, and they used to wonder who lived over there, so near the golden sunsets.

As Bunnyboy grew older, he began to boast about what he knew, and what he had seen, or done, and sometimes

about things he only made believe he knew, and had never done or seen at all.

He may have fancied others would think he was very wise if he talked "big," for he had not then learned how silly boasting sounds, or why those who are really wise are always modest in speaking of what they know or can do.

Another thing Bunnyboy did not know, was that boasting leads to lying, and telling lies is sure, some day, to end in trouble and shame.

Bunnyboy soon found out about these things, in a way which made him remember the lesson as long as he lived.

One pleasant afternoon in the early summer, all the Bunny children had climbed the hill and were watching a



THEY USED TO WONDER WHO LIVED OVER THERE, SO NEAR THE GOLDEN SUNSETS.

lovely sunset, when Cuddledown asked him how many miles it was to sundown.

Bunnyboy said it was not as far as it looked, and that he had walked farther than that one day when he went to the circus with Cousin Jack.

Cuddledown said she would like to look over the edge, where the sky came down, and see what was on the other side, where the sun stayed at night.

Then Bunnyboy very boastfully said he would take her there some day, and show her the beautiful place where the fields all shone like gold, and the rivers like silver, and all the rest was just like a rainbow place, all the time.

Little Cuddledown believed everything Bunnyboy said, because he was older; and though he forgot all about his boasting before they went home, she remembered it and often thought about it afterward.

One day, when the other bunnies were away, she asked her mother whether she might go out to see the rainbow place where the sun went down.

Mother Bunny thought she meant only to climb the hill behind the house, and told her she might go.

Off started Cuddledown, thinking, in her own brave little way, she could go to the edge of the world and get back before tea-time, because Bunnyboy had been farther than that, and had said it was not as far as it seemed to be.

In a little while the others came home, and the mother,

hearing them at play on the lawn, supposed Cuddledown was with them until an hour or two had passed and they came in to tea without her.

When she asked for Cuddledown and was told they had not seen her, Bunnyboy was sent to the hill to bring her home, but soon returned saying she was not there.

Then the family were alarmed, and all went out to look for her in the neighborhood, but everywhere they were told the same story, seen Cuddledown

When evening they could not gan to fear she and was wander-fields or woods ness, or that perlen into some drowned.



OFF STARTED CUDDLEDOWN.

"No one had that afternoon." grew dark, and find her, they be- had lost her way ing about the alone in the dark- haps she had fal- stream and been

The kind neighbors came out with lanterns to help them search for her, while Cousin Jack did the best thing he could do, by climbing the hill and building a bright fire on the top, that she might see the light and come that way, if she was anywhere near the village.

All the long night they searched near and far, and when morning came they had found no trace of the lost Cuddledown.

A sadder family or a more anxious party of friends never saw the sun rise to help them, and without stopping, except to take a hasty breakfast, they kept on looking for her in every place where a little Bunny-child might be lost.

Some went tramping through the woods, shouting her name and looking behind the fallen trees, and in the ditches, while others went up and down the brooks and rivers and along the shores of the ponds to see whether they could find any tiny footprints along the edges, or possibly her little hat floating on the water.

All that day and the next they searched and searched, until they were nearly worn out with grief and disappointment, and then at last they gave up, and almost everyone thought the dear little Cuddledown had fallen into the river and had been carried away to the ocean, and that they should never see her any more.

Several days later, when Mother Bunny had repeated to the Deacon what Cuddledown had said to her before going out, he asked what she could have meant by the "rainbow place where the sun went down."

Then Bunnyboy remembered what he had boastfully told her, the day they watched the sunset together, and was so overcome with the grief and shame that he burst out crying and told his father all about it.

Cousin Jack at once said, "This explains a part of the mystery, for now we can guess which way little Cuddle-

down went, and we must begin the search again, going westward as far as she could walk that afternoon."

That very day another searching party started out, and Cousin Jack, who was lame and could not walk so fast as the others over the rough fields, tried to make up for it by doing more thinking.

Taking a knapsack, to hold a blanket and food enough for a few days, he started off on his crutches, telling the almost broken-hearted mother, as he said good-bye, not to give up, for something in his heart told him that their dear lost Cuddledown would yet be found.

While the others were searching the fields he took the road leading west until he came to a shallow stream which crossed the road, about three miles from home.

There was no bridge, because the stream could be easily forded by grown folks, but Cousin Jack thought a tired little Bunny-girl would not have dared to wade through the water, and might have stopped there to rest. Then he began to look very carefully along the roadside for any signs of her having been there.

Near the edge of the stream he saw a large, round stone, and by its side something glistening in the sun. He picked it up and found, to his great joy, it was a bright new penny with a hole in it, and remembered that he had given Cuddledown one just like it, on the day she went away.

He felt sure she had been sitting on the stone, and looking closer he found a number of strange-looking footprints in the soft earth, larger than any he had ever before seen in that part of the country.

The tracks led to the water, and wading across, he found the same footprints on the other shore, all pointing to the west.

He at once decided to follow them as far as he could, and, taking the road, he travelled on for several miles, guided by the marks of the strange feet where the ground was soft.

When night came he had reached a place where the road divided into two narrow paths, and all signs of the footprints were lost.

He was very tired and almost discouraged, and was glad to wrap his blanket around him and lie down to rest until morning, before deciding which of the two ways to take.

Before he went to sleep he remembered how Cuddle-down used to say a little evening prayer her mother had



HE FOUND A NUMBER OF STRANGE LOOKING
FOOTPRINTS.

taught her, and he began to repeat it very softly to himself :

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, to safely keep ;
And when the morning comes again,
Please help me to be good. Amen !”

When he came to the last line, he thought a minute, and then, instead of saying it just as she did, he changed it the next time to this :

“And when the morning comes again,
Help me to find our child. Amen !”

Then he felt better, but could not go to sleep for thinking about the two paths, and at last he got up, and looking around him, saw, far away in the darkness, the glimmer of many lights.

He knew there must be a settlement there, and that one of the paths must lead that way.

He noticed carefully which one it was, and then lay down and slept peacefully.

In the morning he awoke refreshed, and more hopeful than ever of finding Cuddledown, and all day long he kept cheerfully on the way, stopping only to eat a lunch from his knapsack, or to take a drink of water from a spring on the roadside.

The distance was longer than it had seemed to him the night before, and when evening came he was glad to see

the lights shining not very far off. About nine o'clock the lights began to go out, one by one, and when he reached the place the houses were all dark and the streets deserted.

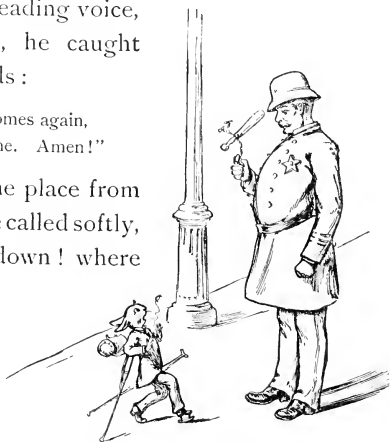
The only living creature he met was a great surly fellow who spoke to him gruffly. The creature had a short club in his hand, and wore a star on his breast, and his face was smooth and white, unlike any Cousin Jack had seen among the friends and neighbors at home.

Not being able to make him understand a single word, Cousin Jack hurried on, hoping to find some one who could talk with him, and give him shelter for the night.

Suddenly, while groping his way through a narrow street, he heard a low, pleading voice, and stopping to listen, he caught quite distinctly the words :

“And when the morning comes again,
Please take me to my home. Amen!”

Springing forward to the place from which the sound came, he called softly, “Cuddledown ! Cuddledown ! where are you ?” Then out of the darkness came a quick, glad cry, “O Cousin Jack ! is it you ? Please take me out of this terrible prison.”



THE CREATURE HAD A SHORT CLUB IN HIS HAND.

The voice came from a large square box in the rear of the house, and behind some strong bars, nailed across the

open side of the box, he found poor Cuddledown penned up alone, like a wild beast in a cage.

In less than a minute he had torn away the bars and taken her out, and his heart was so full of thankfulness at having found her alive, that



O COUSIN JACK! IS IT YOU?

he sat down upon the ground and clasped her close in his arms, while the trembling bunny nestled her face on his shoulder and cried for joy.

Presently she raised her head and whispered, "Oh! Cousin Jack, please let us go away from this place just as fast as we can, or the strange creatures here will find you and shut us both up in wooden cages."

Cousin Jack thought any place was better and safer than this, where a helpless little Bunny-child was kept shut up

alone in the cold and dark, and he told her not to be afraid, for they would start at once for home.

Taking his crutches, and telling her to keep a tight hold upon his coat, they hurried away, and without meeting any one, were soon on the open road.

Cousin Jack was anxious to get away as far as possible, before stopping to rest, and Cuddledown was so glad to get out and be with him once more that she trudged along bravely for nearly two hours.

Then they stopped to rest near a grove of hemlocks, where Cousin Jack cut off some branches to make a kind of bed, and said they would rest there until morning.

Taking her in his arms again, he wrapped the blanket around both, and they lay down to sleep, with only the darkened sky and the waving branches of the trees above them.

Just before Cuddledown went to sleep she whispered to



CLASPED HER CLOSE IN HIS ARMS.

Cousin Jack, "Did God send you to find me, and show you the way?" and he answered, "I hope so, for I am sure he loves little children, and is sorry for everyone who is in trouble."

They were up before sunrise, and after making a breakfast from the food left in the knapsack, they set out again for home.

Cousin Jack hoped they could get there before bedtime, for now that he knew the way and need not stop to look for footprints, they could return much faster than he had come.

He could not carry her very long, for he had to use both hands to manage his crutches, and this troubled him, for he was afraid she would be worn out with walking before their journey was over.

Cuddledown was a brave little bunny, and kept saying she was not very tired, and did not mind the sun and dust. On the way she told him all about how the strange big creatures had found her resting by the shallow stream, where she had



SHE TRUDGED ALONG BRAVELY.

dropped the penny, and what happened to her when they carried her off to the settlement.

There they had put her in the wooden prison, as she called it, where she had been kept, for more than a week, as a plaything for their children.

She could not understand what they said, and their queer ways and smooth white faces frightened her as they stared at her through the bars.

She said they gave her the strangest things to eat, and only a little loose straw for a bed, and the great clumsy children used to take her up and carry her about by the ears. Sometimes they were so rough and squeezed her so hard she thought she should die with the pain.

Cousin Jack said he had heard of something like this before, but could hardly believe anyone could be so cruel as to take other living creatures, who had done them no wrong, away from their homes and friends, and shut them up in pens or cages, just for the pleasure of looking at them, or playing with the poor helpless victims.

He told her he was glad the bunnies had been taught to love their own homes and friends and freedom, as the most precious things in the world, and were too gentle and kind-hearted to wish to rob others of all that made life sweet to them.

Cuddledown said she hoped she should never see any living creature shut up in a pen as she had been. Then



COUSIN JACK WADED THROUGH
THE WATER.

Cousin Jack told her not to think any more about it, for she would soon be safe in her own happy home again, where they would all love her more than ever.

At noon they stopped to rest once more, near a brook, where Cousin Jack bathed her tired feet, and let her take a nap for an hour.

All the afternoon they kept on the way, and at sundown came to the stream without a bridge, and knew they were only a few miles from home.

Cousin Jack waded through the water with Cuddledown clinging to his back on the knapsack, and though they were very tired the

thoughts of home made the rest of the way seem short.

As they climbed the Terrace a bright light was shining in the window, and they could see the family gathered around the table, looking very quiet and sad.

This was all changed in a twinkling as Cousin Jack stepped into the room, leaving Cuddledown outside for a minute, while he told them the good news gently. The first thing he said was, "Cheer up! Cuddledown is found!"

and before he could answer their eager questions, Cuddledown bounded into the room and was safe in her mother's arms once more, but too happy to speak.

They were all nearly wild with joy, and they almost smothered her with hugs and kisses, until Cousin Jack reminded the family that they had come to stay, and when a pair of hungry tramps had walked so many miles, over a dusty road, since sunrise, one of the first things on the programme ought to be a warm bath and something good to eat.

Then Mother Bunny stopped repeating over and over again, "O my poor, precious darling!" dried her eyes, and began to bustle about, making things very lively in that family, until both had been made as comfortable as possible and were ready to tell all about their strange journey.

When Cuddledown told the story of her going to find the "rainbow place," and said it was ever so much farther off than she had thought it was, Bunnyboy went over to her side and told her how sorry he was he had told her what was not true, that day on the hill, and promised her he would never, never boast about himself again, nor try to deceive anyone, even in fun.

Then Cousin Jack told his part of the story, and when he had finished, they all thought it was very strange that he happened to take the right one of the two paths, and find the right place in the dark.

Pinkeyes said that perhaps a guardian angel had led him all the way, but Deacon Bunny said he had a great deal of faith in every-day angels, with brave, willing, and loving hearts, even if they had but one sound leg and a pair of crutches, instead of wings.

“Well, well,” said Cousin Jack, “we don’t really know very much about guardian angels, or how they work ; but my notion is this : If I had not been kept awake by thinking about Cuddledown’s ‘ Now I lay me,’ I might not have seen the lights which led me to the settlement, or known which of the two paths to take.

“And if Cuddledown had not been saying her prayer, like a good child, just as I was passing by in the dark, I might never have found the missing one at all.

“Now it seems to me,” said Cousin Jack, “that the good mother who taught Cuddledown her little prayer, had something to do with my finding her child, and until we know more about these mysteries I think we ought to follow her teaching and example ; and for one, I am going to write Mother Bunny’s name at the head of the list of the Angels in this family.”

CHAPTER III.

MORE TROUBLE FOR THE BUNNYS.

A NEW KIND OF CIRCUS.

THERE were two sides to Runwild Terrace.

On the south side, where the Bunnys lived, there were many cosy cottages, well-kept lawns, and pretty flower-gardens.

The Bunny children and their playmates who lived in these pleasant homes were taught to be kind and gentle, and were usually neatly dressed and tidy in their habits.

On the north side of the Terrace there was another village, where many poor families were huddled together in dingy blocks or small, shabby houses.

The streets were narrow, the door-yards piled with rubbish, and both the old and young were poorly clothed and looked hungry and neglected most of the time. The young Bears and Coons and their neighbors of the north village were commonly called "Cubs," and their names, when they had any, were generally nicknames.

Bunnyboy and Brownie had sometimes met two of the

bear cubs, Tuffy and Brindle, in the fields, and liked to play with them, because they were large and strong, and were usually planning or doing some mischief.

Deacon Bunny soon began to notice that both Bunnyboy and Brownny were becoming rough and clownish in their manners and sometimes used bad words while at play.

He told them the bear cubs were not good company, and advised the Bunnys to keep away from them in future.

One day in September Tuffy Bear met Bunnyboy and asked him to come over and play circus that afternoon.

When Bunnyboy asked his father whether he might go, the Deacon said "No," but that they might play circus at home and invite their playmates to come and spend the afternoon with them.

Like a great many others of his age, Bunnyboy was wilful, and this did not suit him at all, for he wished to have his own way in everything.

He thought his father was very hard and stern; and after sulking awhile, he told Brownny to ask their mother whether they might go berrying.

Mother Bunny said "Yes," if they would come home early; and off they started over the hills.

When out of sight from the house, Bunnyboy said that he was going to the north village to ask Tuffy and Brindle where the berries grew thickest.

He said this to satisfy Brownny; but he knew it was only

a sneaking way of going to see what the bear cubs were doing, and an excuse for disobeying his father.

On the way they met Spud Coon and his grandmother, who lived in the north village.

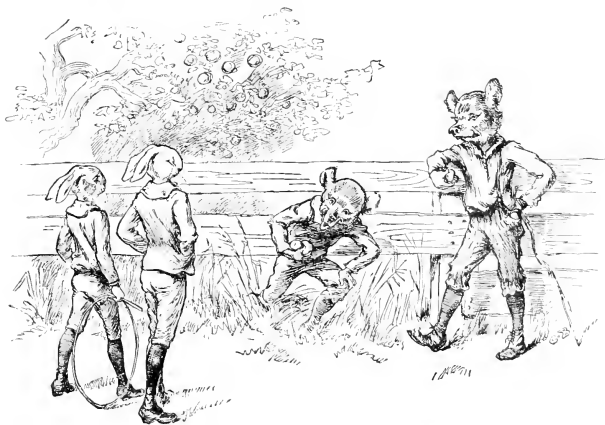
Spud asked them to stop and play with him, or to let him go with them.



YOU HAD BETTER STAY WHERE YOU BELONG, WITH YOUR OLD GRANNY.

Bunnyboy looked scornfully at Spud's torn jacket and bare feet, and replied, "We don't wish to play with a ragged cub like you. You had better stay where you belong, with your old granny."

This word "granny" was one he had picked up from the bear cubs, and he thought it would be smart to use it, because Spud's grandmother was old and feeble and miserably poor.



THEY MET TUFFY AND BRINDLE.

He forgot all he had been taught at home about being polite and respectful to the aged, and he did not stop to think how angry it would make him to hear his own dear grandmother called “granny” by a saucy youngster.

Grandmother Coon looked sharply at Bunnyboy and said she was sorry his manners were not so fine as his clothes, and led away Spud crying and wishing he was big enough to thrash the fellow who called them names because they were poor.

Brownie was ashamed and would have turned back, but Bunnyboy urged him along until they met Tuffy and Brindle, who supposed they had come to play circus.

Tuffy said he knew just the place for a circus-ring and led the way to an open field, a little way out of the village.

Here they began to race about in a circle while Brindle played he was a clown, repeating a lot of stupid words at which they all laughed, pretending they were having great fun.

When they were tired of this, Tuffy said they must have a trained donkey, and if the bunnies would help him he would catch one of the young goats in the pasture on the hill beyond the woods, and make him play donkey for them.

While Tuffy was catching the goat, Brindle was sent to get a long piece of clothes-line, and when he came back with it, the goat was dragged through the fields to the ring.

Then began a great racket; shouting at the frightened



BRINDLE PLAYED HE WAS A CLOWN.

creature, tripping him up, and laughing to see him tug at one end of the line with Tuffy at the other, while Brindle beat him to make him go round and round in the ring.

At last, this rough sport was too much for Brownny's tender heart, and he begged the cubs to let the poor goat go.

This made them angry, and they said that he was trying to spoil the fun, and it would serve him just right to make him play monkey and ride the goat.



THE GOAT WAS DRAGGED THROUGH THE FIELDS.

Bunnyboy began to see what kind of company they were in, and tried to take Brownny's part. Then Tuffy struck Bunnyboy, and a quarrel began in which the bunnies were roughly handled and thrown down on the ground.

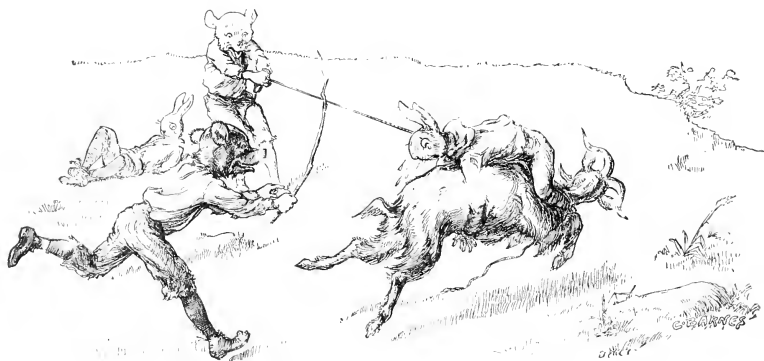
Tuffy was so strong he could easily hold Bunnyboy, and he told Brindle to tie Bunnyboy's hands and feet so that he could not get up.

Then they put Brownny on the goat's back and tied him on, with his feet fastened under the goat's neck and his hands under his body, so that he could not fall off, nor get off, and they said he made a good monkey.

They beat the goat to make him go faster, and hit

Brownny because he cried, while Bunnyboy had to lie helpless and see his little brother abused.

When he tried to call for help they stuffed his mouth full of grass and leaves, and told him to keep still or they would tie up his mouth with a handkerchief.



THEY BEAT THE GOAT TO MAKE HIM GO FASTER.

While this was going on and the bunnies were wondering how it would end, they heard a pack of hounds barking, not very far away.

Tuffy and Brindle did not like dogs, and were afraid of being caught playing such cruel tricks on the bunnies, and they ran away home as fast as they could.

When the goat found he was free from his tormentors he started for the pasture with Brownny still tied on his back,



THEY RAN AWAY HOME AS FAST AS THEY COULD.

leaving Bunnyboy bound hand and foot, alone and helpless on the ground.

Though he shouted for help until he was hoarse, no one came. Then he hoped Tuffy or Brindle would come back and untie him before dark, but they did not.

Evening came, and the moon rose over the hills, and still he lay there alone, wondering what had become of his brother and what would happen if he had to lie there all night.

At last he heard voices in the corn-field near by, and called again for help as loud as he could.

Some one answered, and he felt sure help was coming; but he hardly knew what to think when he saw bending over him the same Grandmother Coon and little Spud, whom he had met on his way.

Spud knew him at once and cried out, "Oh, grandma, here is the same Bunnyboy who called us names this afternoon."

Bunnyboy thought his last chance was gone, but begged

of them not to leave him any longer in his misery, for the cords were hurting him and he ached all over from lying bound and cramped so long.

Spud said, "Good enough for you!" but his grandmother told him that was wrong, and quickly untied Bunnyboy and helped him to his feet.

Then she said, "If you are one of Deacon Bunny's sons, I know your mother. She is a kind friend to us poor folks, and has often brought us food and comforts when we have been sick or in trouble. You behaved badly to us to-day, but I am glad to help you now for her sake, if for no other reason."

Bunnyboy thanked her, and was glad enough to use his stiffened legs once more to hurry home, by the same road he had come but with very different thoughts.

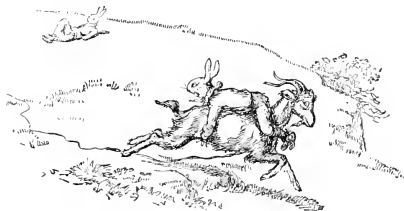
He felt a great deal more respect for his father's opinion of bear cubs, and of what was good company for him to keep, than he had felt when he first left home. The family



HE SAW BENDING OVER HIM THE SAME GRAND-MOTHER COON AND LITTLE SPUD.

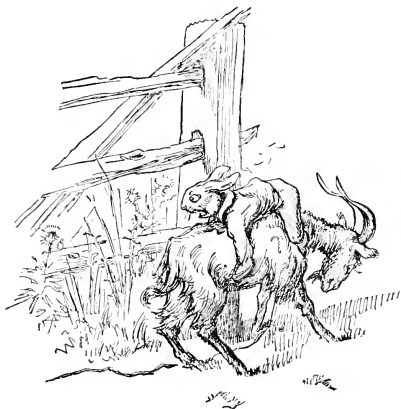
had already begun a search through the neighborhood, and were just planning what to do next, when Bunnyboy reached the house.

When they asked for Brownny, he told them that the last he saw of him was that he was being carried off on a goat's back toward the pasture beyond the north village.



CARRIED OFF ON A GOAT'S BACK.

The Deacon knew where the goat-pasture was, and started at once, with Cousin Jack, to find Brownny.



TRYING TO RID HIMSELF OF HIS BURDEN.

In about an hour they returned bringing Brownny, who was dreadfully frightened, and badly bruised and scratched by the bushes and fences against which the goat had rubbed, in trying to rid himself of his burden.

They had found Browny still tied to the goat, and both lying on the ground, with a dozen or more goats standing about in the moonlight staring at the strange sight.

When Browny had been bathed and had eaten his sup-



A DOZEN OR MORE GOATS STANDING ABOUT IN THE MOONLIGHT.

per, the family sat down to hear how it all had happened.

Then the whole story came out, for Bunnyboy was honest enough to tell the whole truth about going to see the bear cubs, and of the first as well as the last meeting with the Coons.

He owned to his father that he knew he was disobeying him, and never thought of making a bad matter worse by telling lies about it.

When he had finished the Deacon looked very sober and said to Mother Bunny, "I think I ought to give up my mission Sunday-school class in the north village, and see what I can do for our own little heathen in this family.

"I am ashamed," he went on, "to try to teach other folk's children, when one of my own sets such an example, by mocking at misfortune and by being rude and unfeeling to the old and poor, as Bunnyboy has done to-day."

Mother Bunny made no reply, but cried softly to herself, and it almost broke Bunnyboy's heart when he saw her trying to hide her tears behind her handkerchief.

Cousin Jack said it reminded him of the old proverb, "The way of the transgressor is hard," and if Bunnyboy would take it for a text for his next Sunday-school lesson, he thought he would not need a dictionary to tell him what the big word meant, or how hard the wrong way always is,—especially for those who have been taught a better way than they follow.

Then Deacon Bunny turned to Bunnyboy and said, "When I was a boy the only whipping my father ever gave me was for disobeying him, and perhaps I ought to follow his example."

Bunnyboy thought a whipping would be the easiest part

of his punishment, if that would blot out the record of the day, but he did not say so.

After thinking a moment the Deacon went on to say, "You all know that my father's plan is not my way of teaching you to do right. I think if a boy with such a home, and such a mother as you have, can not learn to be a good boy without whipping, he will not learn at all, but will keep on doing wrong, until he has brought sorrow and shame on himself, and on all who love him."

"Well, well!" said Cousin Jack, "there is always one good thing that may be saved from the wreck of a bad day, and that is a good resolution." Then calling Bunnyboy to his side, he said, "My poor boy, I am sorry for you, and I know just how you hate yourself for what has happened, for I used to get into just such scrapes myself, when I was young and thoughtless."

This made Bunnyboy feel better, but more like crying, and he pressed Cousin Jack's hand very hard.

"I have noticed," said Cousin Jack, "that most boys seem to have these attacks of lying, boasting, and disobeying their parents, just as they have the measles, chicken-pox, or whooping-cough, and when they have suffered as Bunnyboy has suffered for his disobedience to-day, they are not likely to have the same attack again."

Bunnyboy looked very gratefully at Cousin Jack for helping him out, and told them all he was truly sorry and

would never do so any more, and that early next morning he would ask Grandmother Coon's pardon in good earnest, and give Spud the best toy he had in the house. As for Tuffy and Brindle, he had seen enough of them, and their kind of a circus, to last him a lifetime.

Mother Bunny looked at the clock, said it was time the bunnies were asleep, and led them away to bed. When his mother kissed him good-night, Bunnyboy whispered to her, "Don't cry any more about it, mother, for I will try not to make you cry for me again, the longest day I live."

And the best part of the story is that he never did.

Many years after, when Bunnyboy had grown up, the sweetest praise he ever received, was when his mother told him he had been a good son and a great comfort to her, ever since the day he played circus with Tuffy and Brindle Bear.

CHAPTER IV.

TUFFY'S "WILD WEST."

WITH A SEQUEL.

THE next morning after their scrape with Tuffy and Brindle, both Bunnyboy and Brownny were able to be up and dressed, but did not feel so nimble as usual.

Brownny's wrists and ankles were chafed and swollen where the cords had held him bound on the goat's back, and Bunnyboy was somewhat stiff and sore from lying so long fettered on the ground.

There had been some talk in the family, before the bunnies came down to breakfast, about what should be done with "those good-for-nothing bear cubs," as the Deacon called them.

Just what ought to be done was a hard question to decide ; but at last Cousin Jack said he would take the matter in hand, and try a little home-missionary work on the bear family.

He thought there might be some better way found for Tuffy and Brindle to use their strong, healthy

bodies and active minds, than in idle mischief and cruel sports.

The Deacon said he was welcome to the task, but, as for himself, he felt more like a bad-tempered heathen than a missionary, every time he thought of their shameful treatment of poor Brownie.

That afternoon Cousin Jack asked Bunnyboy to go with him to the north village, and call on Tuffy's mother, who was a widow.

When they were ready to start, Mother Bunny gave Bunnyboy a well-filled basket, saying to Cousin Jack that she never liked to have any one go missionarying among the poor and needy, quite empty-handed.

Cousin Jack said he was always glad to carry more food than tracts to such folks, and off they started to find the Widow Bear.

They found her in a wretched place, not much better than a hovel, and looking very tired and miserable.

Two shabby little cubs were playing in the door-yard, and another was crying in Mother Bear's arms, when she came to the door to let them in.

She thought Cousin Jack was a minister, or a bill-collector, and began to dust a chair for him with her apron, and to tell him her troubles at the same time.

Cousin Jack gave her the basket of good things from Mother Bunny, but said nothing about the circus affair,

because he thought the poor Mother Bear had enough to worry her, already.

When he asked her why Tuffy and Brindle did not get some work to do, to help her, she told him that since their father died she had been too poor to buy them clothes fit to wear to school, and they had grown so wild and lawless that no one would give them work.

She said they were both over in the pasture by the brook, playing, and were probably in some new mischief by this time.

“ Well, well,” said Cousin Jack, “ don’t be discouraged ; perhaps they may live to be a comfort to you yet ; at any rate, we will hunt them up, and see if there is not something besides mischief in them, and I’ll try to get some work for Tuffy to do.”

Widow Bear thanked him, and bidding her “ Good afternoon,” they set out for the pasture.

On the way Bunnyboy was quiet and thoughtful, for he had never seen such poverty and misery before.

After thinking about it for a while, he said he felt sorry for the Mother Bear, and wondered if Tuffy’s father had been a good man.

Cousin Jack said he did not know ; very good folks were sometimes very poor ; but the saddest part of these hard lives was, that so many good mothers and innocent little children were made to suffer for the faults of others, and that bad habits were too often the real cause.

When they came to the brook, they saw Tuffy and his companions on the top of a hill in the pasture, racing about and having a roaring good time.

Tuffy had been showing them how to play "Wild West."

He had a long rope, with a noose on one end, and the other end tied around his waist, for he was playing that he was both horse and rider, and having great fun lassoing the others, and hauling them about like wild horses or cattle.

Just as Cousin Jack and Bunnyboy reached the foot of the hill, Tuffy had grown so vain of his strength and skill, that he boastfully said he was going to lasso one of the young steers browsing near by.

They saw him creep carefully forward, and then, giving the coil a few steady whirls in the air, he sent the noose flying over the steer's head.

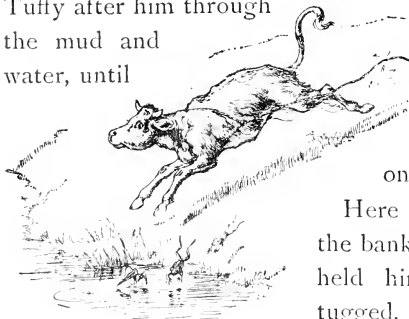
The loop fell loosely over the creature's neck, and as the crowd set up a shout the steer started on a run.

One foot went through the open noose, the rope tightened over and under the steer's shoulders, and away he went, with Tuffy tugging manfully at the other end of the rope.

The more they shouted the faster the steer ran, Tuffy following as fast as his legs could carry him, until the frightened creature plunged down the hill at full speed.

Half-way down Tuffy tripped and fell headlong, and, hitched by the rope he had so carelessly left tied around his own body, he was dragged down the grassy slope, unable to rise, or get a footing.

On dashed the steer, across the broad but shallow brook, dragging Tuffy after him through the mud and water, until



HE WAS DRAGGED DOWN THE
GRASSY SLOPE.

the cub was landed
on the farther shore.

Here Tuffy's weight against the bank stopped the steer, and held him fast; but he still tugged, until Cousin Jack came to the rescue and cut the rope with his knife.

After Tuffy was upon his feet again, and had rubbed some of the mud from his face and eyes, he looked sheepishly about him, while the rest laughed and jeered at the drenched and drabbled cub.

Cousin Jack asked him if he was hurt, and told him he would better wring out his wet jacket, and sit down on a log in the sun, before he went home to change his clothes.

When Tuffy said he was all right, but had no other

clothes to put on, Cousin Jack asked him why he did not go to work and earn some.

Tuffy replied that he could not get any work to do.

Then said Cousin Jack, kindly, "That is just what I have come to talk with you about, for I have been to see your poor, patient, hard-working mother, and I can hardly believe that a strong, healthy fellow, as you are, is really willing to be a trouble to her instead of a help."

Tuffy said gruffly, "How can I help it when no one will give me a chance?"

"Then I would try to make a chance," said Cousin Jack, "and begin by helping her take care of the children.

"Tuffy," said he, "if you're really in earnest, I will find you some decent clothes and work to do."

Tuffy was puzzled, for he had thought Cousin Jack had come over to settle with him for abusing the bunnies; but as Cousin Jack spoke so kindly and earnestly, he managed to say, "Try me and see."

Then Cousin Jack advised him to wash himself, go to bed early, and let his clothes dry; and in the morning, if he would come over to Deacon Bunny's, he should have a better suit.

When Tuffy and the others had gone, and the Bunnys were on their way home, Bunnyboy said that perhaps Tuffy was not so bad a fellow after all.

Cousin Jack said he was glad to hear Bunnyboy say this;

for it was a good plan, once in a while, to stop and think how much a good home and proper training had to do with making some folks better or more fortunate than others, and with giving a fair start in life.



COUSIN JACK ADVISES TUFFY.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESCUE.

A HERO FOR A DAY, AND AN EVERY-DAY HERO.

WHEN Tuffy came home his mother asked him what had happened to make him so wet.

He told her he had been fooling with a steer and got a ducking, but that he didn't care, for he was going to bed, and his clothes would be dry before he needed to wear them again.

He said he was going over to Runwild Terrace in the morning, to see if Lame Jack Bunny meant what he had said about giving him a new suit of clothes, and finding him a place where he might have steady work.

Mother Bear told him the Bunny family were very kind to take an interest in him, and she hoped he would try to do his best.

Tuffy replied he should take more stock in them, when he had seen the clothes, for he had heard folks talk well before.

Then he went to bed, and his poor mother sat up half

the night cleaning and patching the ragged garments, so that they might look as tidy as possible for the visit.

At about ten o'clock the next day he started, wondering how the trip would turn out, and how it would seem to be dressed a little more like other folks.

On the way to Deacon Bunny's, Tuffy had to cross a bridge over a river across which a dam had been built, so that the water might be used for power to run the factories in the north village.

The stream curved sharply to the left, above the dam, and the swift current swept over the falls in a torrent, to the rocky rapids below.

When Tuffy reached the river, a crowd was gathered on the bank and they were all watching something on the stream above the dam.

He ran to see what was the matter, and saw a small skiff, or rowboat, drifting down the stream.

In the boat were old Grandmother Coon, and Totsy, her little grandchild.

He could hear their piteous cries for help, as the boat drifted nearer and nearer to the dam.

Their only chance of being saved, was that the boat might drift close to a snag which stood out in the middle of the stream, where a tall pine-tree had lodged during a recent freshet.

A few feet of the bare top rose above the surface of the water, with the roots held fast below.

Fortunately the current set that way, and, as the boat drew near, Grandmother Coon caught hold of the snag and stopped the boat in the swiftest part of the current.

The boat swayed and tossed about, but she clung with all her strength and held it fast.



IN THE BOAT WERE OLD GRANDMOTHER COON, AND TOTSY.

There was no other boat at hand, and the excited crowd on the shore seemed helpless to aid her.

Someone said that if he could swim, he would go and help her hold the boat.

Tuffy heard the remark, and without pausing a second,

ran up the shore to the bend, stripped off his jacket, and plunged into the stream.

He could swim like a duck, and by the help of the current, was soon in line with the boat ; but then he was clear-headed enough to know he must strike the snag, for his weight would upset the boat, or break her loose, if he tried to climb in.

As he drew near, a few steady strokes brought his breast against the snag, and he grasped the gunwale of the boat with both hands, just as Grandmother Coon, overcome with the strain and excitement, let go her hold and fell back into the bottom of the boat.

When the crowd on the shore saw Tuffy with his body braced against the snag, and his strong arms on either side holding the boat against the current, they gave a shout, and called to him :

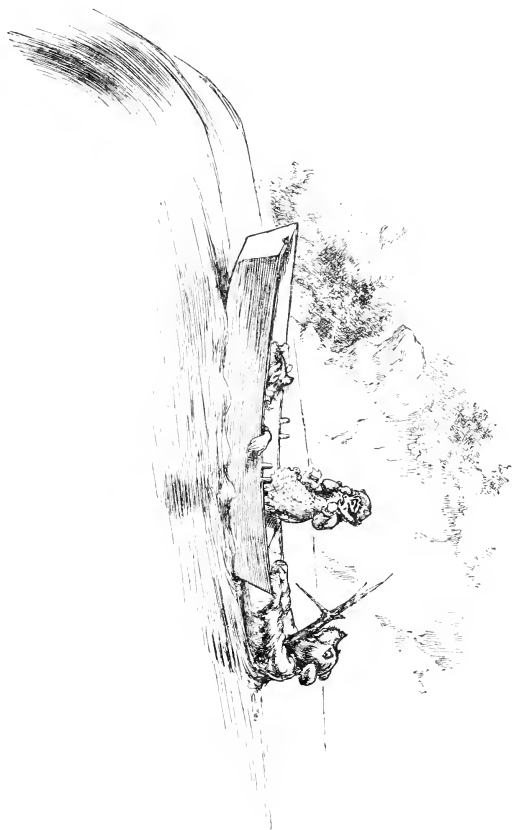
“ Stick and hang, Tuffy ! Don’t let go ! ”

And stick and hang he did, until he thought his arms would be pulled from his body, while the frantic folks on the shore rushed about making a great fuss, but doing nothing of real use.

At last a long rope was found, and someone who had kept calm and had his wits about him, told them to tie one end of the rope to a plank and follow him.

Taking the plank up stream, to the bend where Tuffy had jumped in, they threw it far out into the river.

TUFFY'S BRAVE ACTION.



By giving the rope plenty of slack, the plank, caught by the current, was carried well out toward the other side.

They watched it drifting down toward the boat, and when they saw that the plank would go outside the snag and carry the rope within Tuffy's reach, they called to him to keep cool, and hang on until by pulling on the rope they could bring it to the surface.

Every minute seemed an hour to Tuffy, whose hands and arms were stiffened and cramped with the grip and strain, and he found it no easy matter to seize the rope without losing his hold on the boat.

When they had hauled in on the rope, and drawn the plank close to the boat, Tuffy managed to get the rope between his legs.

By holding on with all his might with his right hand, he shifted the left to the same side of the snag, and then taking a fresh grip on the gunwale, he told them to haul away!

In a few minutes the boat was drawn to the shore and safely landed with its living load.

Grandmother and Totsy Coon were tenderly cared for, and Tuffy, who was chilled and tired out by his long struggle, was taken to a house near by, given a good rubbing, and a change of dry clothing.

Every one praised him for his brave act and his pluck in holding to the boat so long.

They all said he was a hero, and had saved two lives by risking his own, and more than one made the remark :

“ Who would have thought that vagabond of a Tuffy Bear was such a brave, generous fellow ! ”

It made Tuffy feel strange to hear himself praised, and he wondered if he was really the same Tuffy the villagers had called a “ good-for-nothing cub,” ever since he could remember !

When Grandmother Coon was asked how they happened to be in a boat, without oars or paddle, she said that Totsy had run away and climbed into the boat, and when she stepped in after the little one, the boat, which was not fastened, tipped up with the added weight, and floated off into deep water.

After the excitement was over, Tuffy went on his way to Runwild Terrace, in his borrowed clothes, and found Cousin Jack waiting for him.

Some one had carried the news of the accident and the res-

cue to the Terrace, and here Tuffy was given a hearty welcome, and praised on all sides.



TOTSY IN THE BOAT.

Cousin Jack told him he had made a splendid beginning, and he was glad an occasion had offered for him to prove his mettle and to show that he could use, as well as abuse, his brains and strength.

The Bunnys kept him to dinner, and made up a bundle of comfortable clothing for Brindle and the other children.

After dinner Cousin Jack told Tuffy that the Terrace folks had made up a purse of money for him, and that one of the store-keepers had offered to give him a full new suit.

When they went to look for work Cousin Jack advised him to learn a trade, and found a machinist who would give him a place in a shop and pay small wages for the first year.

Tuffy agreed to begin work the next day, and went home very proud and happy.

The neighbors had been there before him with the story, and some, who were both able and willing, had sent in plenty of food and clothing for the family, when it was known how poor and needy they were.

Tuffy's mother told him it was the proudest day of her life, and said she always knew he would prove a credit to the family, for his father was a brave man, and had been a soldier in the war, before Tuffy was born.

Tuffy went to his work the next morning bright and early, and for a few weeks he liked the change.

After a while the days seemed long, and the Sundays a long way apart.

One day when Cousin Jack dropped in to see him, Tuffy grumbled a little, and said he was tired of being shut up in a shop all day, when the other fellows he knew were having fun, chestnutting, and going to base-ball games.

Cousin Jack said that there was where the pluck came in: he must keep his grip on his work, just as he did on the boat, the day he saved two lives.

Tuffy replied that folks seemed to have forgotten all about his being a hero, as they had called him then, and that they treated him just as if he was the same old Tuffy after all.

"Well, well!" said Cousin Jack, "that is the way of the world, and you must not mind it.

"You did a noble and plucky thing that day in the river, but you are doing a harder and a nobler task now, by working to help your mother support the family, and send your brothers and sisters to school."

Cousin Jack talked with him hopefully about his work, and told him there were a great many real, every-day heroes who never had a chance to earn the title by a single great act of courage or endurance, but they were heroes just the same.



AN "EVERY-DAY HERO."

“Stick to your work, Tuffy,” said he, “and don’t weaken because the current is strong against you, and one of these days, perhaps, you will be a great inventor, or the owner of a shop like this, yourself.”

This made Tuffy feel better, and when he went home that night he told his mother she need not worry any more about his giving up learning a trade, as he had threatened to do. “For,” said Tuffy, “I am going to stick to my work and try to be one of Jack Bunny’s *Every-Day Heroes!*”

CHAPTER VI.

THE BUNNVY'S PICNIC.

PART I.



UDDLEDOWN'S birthday was in June, and June, the month of roses, was coming in a few weeks.

Then the Bunnys were to have a picnic, if all were well and the weather proved fine.

They were fond of picnics and liked to have them a long way off from home.

Now there were plenty of green fields and pleasant groves near by Runwild Terrace, but the Bunnys thought the best part of a picnic was the going away from a noisy neighborhood, in search of new places to ramble in for the day, and having a dinner out-of-doors.

They were always glad to come home again when the day's fun was over, but they really loved the quiet and

strangeness of the woods and fields, and knew how pleasant it was to find some wild place, where they could play that all the world was their own, to be good and happy in for a little while, all by themselves.

There never seemed to be any room in such places for naughty thoughts or actions, and they always came home so full of fresh air and sunshine that the good feeling would last for several days, in spite of the little trials and tempers which might come peeping around the corners of their work or play at home.

For a long time after those sad and anxious days when Cuddledown was missing, the Bunnys felt rather timid about going very far away from the village alone.

They used to talk about the strange creatures, with smooth, white faces, who carried Cuddledown off to the settlement where Cousin Jack had found her, and they often wondered if they should ever meet them in the fields when berrying or having a picnic.

Bunnyboy was the captain of a soldier company, made up of a dozen or more of his playmates, and Cousin Jack called them his "Awkward Squad"; but they looked very grand in their blue flannel uniforms, bright crimson sashes and gilt buttons, and they felt and talked almost as grand as they looked.

Sometimes they talked rather boastfully about what they would do, when they were grown up and had real guns

instead of wooden ones, if the strangers ever came to molest them at the Terrace.

One day when Bunnyboy and his soldiers were talking very bravely about this matter, the Deacon asked Bunnyboy if they had ever practiced "Right-about face, Double-quick, March!"

Bunnyboy saw the twinkle in his father's eyes, and replied: "Oh, you think we would run at the first sight of the smooth-faces, do you?"

The Deacon smiled and said he hoped not, but the bravest soldiers were usually modest as well as brave, and perhaps Cousin Jack would tell them a story some time about two dogs he once heard of, whose names were "Brag" and "Holdfast."

Cousin Jack answered him by saying: "The dog story is all right so far as it goes, but my advice to them is to keep right on thinking brave thoughts, for such thoughts have the right spirit, and are good company for old or young.

"It would hardly pay," said he, "to grow up at all, if we did not love our homes and country enough to be willing to defend them with our lives, if necessary."

Browny, who carried the flag, waved his staff and said: "Just you wait until we are bigger and have swords and guns, and see if we do not teach the smooth-faces a lesson."

"Browny," said Cousin Jack, "I hope by that time guns

will be out of fashion, for real courage does not depend so much on swords and guns as some folks imagine.

"Perhaps," said he, "the smooth-faces are not so bad as they seem to us, and they may have meant no wrong by taking Cuddledown with them to the settlement. They might have left her to starve and perish alone, and then we should have lost her altogether.

"A brave spirit and a revengeful spirit," he continued, "are two very different things, and you should be careful, Brownie, not to get them mixed. However, it is now time for you all to go on with your drilling."

Turning to the company, Cousin Jack looked them over very carefully and said, "Keep your shoulders straight,—eyes to the front,—keep step to the music and—obey your commander!"

"Attention! company, forward, MARCH!" shouted Bunnyboy, and off they tramped, looking so brave and manly that even the Deacon clapped his hands and cried, "Bravo! they are a plucky lot, that is a fact, and I am proud of them."

So many months had passed, during which nothing had been seen or heard of the strangers, that the Bunnys began to feel less timid, and to wish they might see some of the places Cousin Jack and Cuddledown had passed on their journey.

Cousin Jack told them it would be a pleasant drive, and

if the Deacon would let them take the horse and carriage for the picnic party, they would go that way when the time came.

Even a few weeks seemed a long time to wait, but at last the day came, and very early one bright morning the near neighbors knew that something was to happen, by the noise the Bunnys were making.

They were all up with the sun, and Cuddledown had to be kissed six times by each member of the family, and each had a pretty card or gift for her birthday.

After breakfast, when Gaffer brought the family carriage to the door, they were in such a hurry to be off, they could scarcely wait for Mother Bunny to pack the lunch-basket and get all the things ready for a long day away from home.

When all were stowed away in the carriage, and the four Bunnys were seated, Cousin Jack took the reins, while Brownny shouted "All aboard!" and with a rousing "Good-bye!" to the father and mother, off they started, as merry as larks in a meadow.

The fields and lanes were all so lovely they could not help stopping on the way to pick a handful of the golden buttercups and fragrant lilacs. while all around them in the trees and hedges the birds were filling the air with melody, and seemed to be inviting everybody to come out and enjoy the fine weather.

After a pleasant drive of more than two hours, they came to the "two roads," and found the very spot where Cousin Jack had slept the first night of his journey, and from which he first saw the lights in the settlement.

They could just see, from the top of a hill near by, the white church-spires glistening in the sun, but they did not wish to go any nearer.

The Bunnys were not really afraid, for Cousin Jack was with them, but they were glad when he said they would drive back by the other road and have their picnic nearer home.

On the way, about noon-time, they came to a place where there was a busy little brook, and a shining pond half-covered with lily-pads, and an open pasture with many large flat stones scattered about in the short grass, just right for resting-places.

Cousin Jack said they could not find a better place, for close by on a little knoll was a grove of pine-trees, near enough together to make it shady and cool, and not too thick for playing hide-and-seek.

Under the trees the ground was covered with a soft clean mat of last year's dry pine-needles, making the nicest kind of a couch to lie upon and watch the stray sunbeams peeping through the branches overhead.

The lunch-baskets were hung on a low limb of a pine-tree, so that the busy little ants and other creeping things

need not be tempted to meddle with the Bunnys' dinner, and so it might be out of reach of any stray dog that might be roving about.

When Cousin Jack had tied the horse in a safe place, and given him a feed of oats in a nose-bag, the Bunnys ran off to play, and had great fun racing about the fields, looking for turtles on the edges of the pond, or making tiny boats of birch-bark, on which they wrote pleasant messages to send down the brooks to any one who might chance to find them lodged or floating on the stream below.

While they were playing by the pond, they heard a strange croaking noise, and found that it came from two large green frogs, half-hidden in the drift-wood lodged against some overhanging bushes on the bank.

Little Cuddledown said she thought the frogs must be learning to talk, and asked what they were trying to say. Just for fun, Bunnyboy told her it sounded as if one of them was saying :

“Get the lunch ! Get the lunch !
Eat it up ! eat it up !”

and the other frog answered :

“Me the jug ! Me the jug !
Ker chug !”

This made them all feel hungry, and Cuddledown thought it was time to be going back to the tree, before the frogs

found the baskets with the sandwiches and cakes and the jug of milk the mother had packed up so carefully for their dinner.

So they all ran back to the grove and helped Cousin Jack to spread out the dinner on the top of a large flat rock, where they could all sit around as if at a table, and make it seem like having a real home dinner in the open air.

After dinner they packed up the dishes in the basket, and all the broken bits and crumbs that were left over were scattered about on the ground, so that the little bugs might have a picnic too, all by themselves, under the leaves and grass.

Cousin Jack thought Cuddledown had played so hard that she must be tired and sleepy, and spreading a lap-robe under the trees they lay down to take a nap, while the others wandered away in search of fresh flowers to take home in the baskets.

By and by, when they came back to the grove, Bunnyboy had an armful of fragrant wild azaleas and hawthorn blossoms; Pinkeyes had a huge bouquet of buttercups and pretty grasses, and Brownny a lovely bunch of delicate blue violets. These he had wrapped in large, wet leaves to keep the tender blossoms from losing all their dainty freshness before he could give them to his mother.

It was now time to think about driving back to the vil-



THE PICNIC.

lage, and presently, when the baskets, and flowers, and Bunnys were all snugly stowed away in the carriage again, they started off for home, waving good-bye with their handkerchiefs to the pleasant grove, while the nodding tree-tops and swaying branches answered the salute in their own graceful way.

As they drew near the outskirts of the village, and were passing through a shady lane, they heard voices in the distance, which seemed to come from behind the hill at the right of the road.

The voices soon changed to cries for help, and tying the horse by the roadside they hurried to the top of the hill, where a strange and startling sight was before them.

PART II.

NEAR the foot of the hill was a pine grove and a gently sloping field, very much like the one the Bunnys had left, and beyond was a low marsh, or peat meadow, overgrown with low bushes and tufts of rank grasses.

Huddled together near the edge of the marsh was a group of frightened little ones, evidently another picnic-party, but in trouble.

Out in the marsh someone was clinging to the bushes, waving her hand and calling for help, while a few feet beyond they could see a small object, which looked like the head and shoulders of a child, slowly sinking into the bog.

Cousin Jack knew at a glance what had happened, and telling Bunnyboy and Brownny to follow him, and Pinkeyes to look after the group below, he led the way to the nearest rail-fence.

Loosening the rails, he told the Bunnys to drag them along one at a time, and then hurried as fast as his crutches would carry him to the edge of the marsh.

The Bunnys were close behind him with a stout rail, and laying down his crutches he crept out as far as he



THE BUNNYS TO THE RESCUE.

could safely go, dragging the rail after him, until he was within a few feet of the sinking child.

Then he pushed the rail over the yielding and treacherous quagmire to the little fellow and told him to put his arms over it, hang on, and stop struggling.

The Bunnys soon had two more rails within reach, and these Cousin Jack pushed alongside the other, making a

kind of wooden bridge, or path, over which he crawled, and at last by main strength pulled the half-buried child out of the soft, wet mire.

In a few minutes, both had safely crept back over the rails to the solid ground.

Meanwhile, the grown person who was clinging to the bushes, had succeeded in pulling her feet out of the mire by lying down, and, imitating Cousin Jack's example, had crept out of the marsh and joined Pinkeyes and Cuddle-down in quieting the little ones, who were crying in their fright and helplessness.

A few words explained it all. They were a party of little orphan Bears, Coons, Woodchucks, 'Possums, Squirrels, and Rabbits from the Orphans' Home in the village, and had come out for a picnic with Miss Fox, one of the matrons of the Home.

Toddle Tumblekins Coon, the little fellow Cousin Jack had saved from being buried alive in the bog, had strayed away in search of flowers and become helplessly mired in one of the soft spots in the marsh.

In going to his rescue, the matron had also been caught in a bog-hole, and but for the timely help of Cousin Jack and the Bunnys, both might have lost their lives.

The first thing to do was to wash off some of the wet black mud at the brook, and wrap up the shivering Tumblekins in shawls and blankets, to keep him from taking cold.

Miss Fox's feet were wet and covered with mud, but she was so busy looking after the others that she did not mind that ; and soon, with the help of the Bunnys, the baskets and the wraps were picked up and they all set out for home.

It was not very far to the village, but the Bunnys said they would walk and let some of the tired little ones ride in the carriage.

Cousin Jack agreed to this plan and loaded both seats full of the smallest orphans, and with Cuddledown by his side, drove off at the head of the procession, while the rest trudged on behind.

When they reached the Orphanage the Bunnys said good-bye to their new friends and were invited by Miss Fox to come and see the children at home, some day, and meet the other matrons, who would be glad to thank them for all their kindness.

It was nearly dusk before the Bunnys reached home, and they were all so eager to tell about the day's doings and the strange accident in the marsh that they all tried to talk at once.

Mother Bunny said they must be hungry after such a long day, and so much excitement, but after supper she would be glad to hear all about it and enjoy the picnic at second hand.

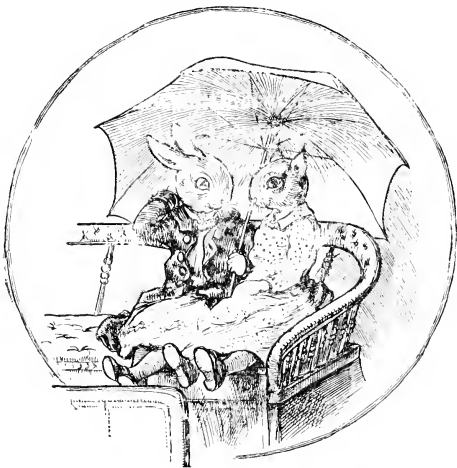
The Deacon said he would join in the same request, if

they would take turns in talking, instead of turning the tea-table into a second Babel, and Cousin Jack said something which sounded like a subdued "Amen."

By the time they had finished supper, however, Cousin Jack and Bunnyboy had told the general story of the day, in answer to the Deacon's questions, and as they gathered about the library-table for the evening, each of the other Bunnys had something to tell of the day's happenings, and of what the orphans had said to them on the way home.

Cuddledown told how the little Squirrel orphan, who sat next to her on the front seat with Cousin Jack, had said she had a dolly with real hair and asked whether Cuddledown had ever seen one.

"I almost laughed," said Cuddledown, "and was going to tell her I had half a dozen dollys at home, but I did not. I only told her I had a dolly with real



"I ALMOST LAUGHED," SAID CUDDLEDOWN.

hair, too, and that my dolly's name was Catharine."

"Why did you not tell her you had more dolls?" asked Cousin Jack.

"Because—because I thought perhaps she had only one, and I didn't wish to make her feel unhappy," said Cuddledown.

Mother Bunny drew Cuddledown close to her side and said, "That was a good reason, dear, and I am glad my little daughter is growing up to be kind and thoughtful of others."

Then the Deacon said, "Next," and Pinkeyes told them all about the pleasant talk she had with two little sister Coons who walked with her.

They told her how they lived at the Home, about their lessons and singing in the morning, learning to sew and playing games in the large hall in the afternoon, or taking pleasant walks with the "Aunties," as they called the kind matrons who took care of them.

They both told her they liked "Visitors' day," the best of all in the week, for then the kind young ladies came and told them stories, or read about the pretty pictures in books they brought.

When Pinkeyes finished her story she said to Mother Bunny, "When I am old enough I shall ask you to let me have an afternoon out, just as the cook has for her own, every week, and then I will be one of the visitors.

"I know lots of stories," said Pinkeyes, "and I should like to help those little orphans to forget that they have no fathers and mothers, and no homes of their own, like ours."

The Deacon smiled as he said, "That will all come about in good time, my dear, I am sure, for I have had hard work to keep your mother away from the Orphanage, long enough to let the children there have a quiet season of the measles, between her visits."

Cousin Jack looked at the Deacon as he said, "Kindness seems to be a family trait on the mother's side, in this household, and I hope we may all be able to bear up a little longer under our part of the burden"; and then, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, he turned and said, "Your turn now, Brownny."

Brownny began by saying he had great fun racing with a young 'Possum who said his other name was "Oliver."

Cousin Jack said that Oliver was probably a favorite name in that family, and perhaps that was the reason it was usually written "O-possum."

The Deacon pretended to groan and said, "Oh! please give Brownny a chance to tell his story, and finish up this picnic before morning, for I am getting sleepy."

Then Brownny said the little fellow was about his size, and wore a sailor-suit, just like the pretty one he had worn the summer before.

A funny thing about the jacket was that it had on the right shoulder the same kind of a three-cornered mended place that his own had, and he wondered if Oliver had tumbled out of a cherry-tree, as he himself did when he tore his jacket.

Then he asked his mother what had become of his sailor-suit.

The Deacon looked over to Mother Bunny and slyly said he was beginning to understand why it was that a suit of clothes never lasted more than one season in that family, and why their children never had anything fit to wear left over from last year.

Mother Bunny blushed a little as she replied: "Our children outgrow *some* of their clothing, Father, and it seems a pity not to have it doing somebody some good. You knew very well," said she, "when we sent the bundle last spring, even if you did not know all that was inside."

Cousin Jack remarked that he saw a load of wood going over there about that time, and if his memory was not at fault the Deacon was driving and using the bundle of clothing for a seat.

Brownny asked if it really was his suit that Oliver was wearing, and his mother said it probably was the same one, for she sent it in the bundle with the other things, although she was almost ashamed to do so, because the mended place showed so plainly.

Cousin Jack smiled at Brownly and said, "You ought to be thankful you have such a kind mother to help to hide the scars left by your heedlessness, but how about the other little chap who did not fall out of a tree, but has to wear your patches for you?"

Brownly did not answer, for he remembered how it happened. He had nearly ruined a young cherry-tree, besides tearing his jacket, by trying to get the fruit without waiting for a ladder as he had been told to do. Turning again to the Deacon, Cousin Jack said, "It seems to me you might make a good Sunday-school talk on the subject of second-hand clothes. I have seen," he continued, "large families where the outgrown garments were handed down from older to younger until the patches and stains left for the last one to wear would have ruined the reputation, if not the disposition, of a born angel."

The Deacon said he would think about it, for it was rather unfair to the orphans to label them with the ink-stains and patches, and other signs of untidiness or carelessness, which really belonged to the Bunnys themselves.

"Well, well," said Cousin Jack, "perhaps when you get the subject well warmed-over for the Sunday-school children, you can season it with a few remarks to the grown folks, who may be a little careless in handing down their second-hand habits of fault-finding, ill-temper, and other

failings, for their children to wear and be blamed for all their lives."

The Deacon coughed, and as he saw Bunnyboy trying to hide a yawn with his hand, he asked him what he was trying to say.

Bunnyboy replied that he was not saying anything, but was trying to keep awake by thinking about how Tumblekins looked before they washed him in the brook.

"From his shoulders to his heels," said he, "Tumblekins was plastered with black mud so thick that you could not see whether his clothing was patched or whole."

"I felt sorry for him," continued Bunnyboy, "but he looked so comical I could not help laughing."

Brownyn said he hoped the little fellow had another of his suits to put on at the Home, and he guessed Tumblekins wouldn't mind wearing a patch or two, rather than to be sent to bed until the soiled one was washed and dried.

Brownyn's remark reminded Mother Bunny that it was getting late, and long past the Bunnys' bedtime, and, as Cuddledown had been fast asleep in her arms for half an hour, she said they ought not to sit up any longer.

So they all said "Good-night," and went to bed, tired but happy, and thankful, too, that they had so happy and so comfortable a home, all their own, with Father and Mother and Cousin Jack to share it with them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BUNNYS' GARDEN.



THE garden at Deacon Bunny's was a real garden.

It was not one of the "Keep off the grass" nor the "Do not handle" kind, where the walks and flower-beds are as prim and regular as a checkerboard ; but a garden to work in, to rest in, and to enjoy.

Gaffer Hare, who was called Deacon Bunny's farmer, was the head-gardener ; but all the Bunnys were gardeners also, and they had one or more plats each, to keep in order, in which they planted what they liked best.

The only rule the Deacon made was that the Bunnys should take good care of what they called their own, and should see to it that the weeds did not rob the flowers of what rightfully belonged to them.

"Weeds will grow anywhere that flowers can grow," said

the Deacon, "and all that is best and loveliest, and really worth having, needs constant care and work to make it thrive."

Of all the Bunnys, Pinkeyes loved flowers and the care of them best, and for this reason and others, she was Gaffer's favorite.

He never tired of telling her of the many varieties of plants and shrubs and the best way to treat them.

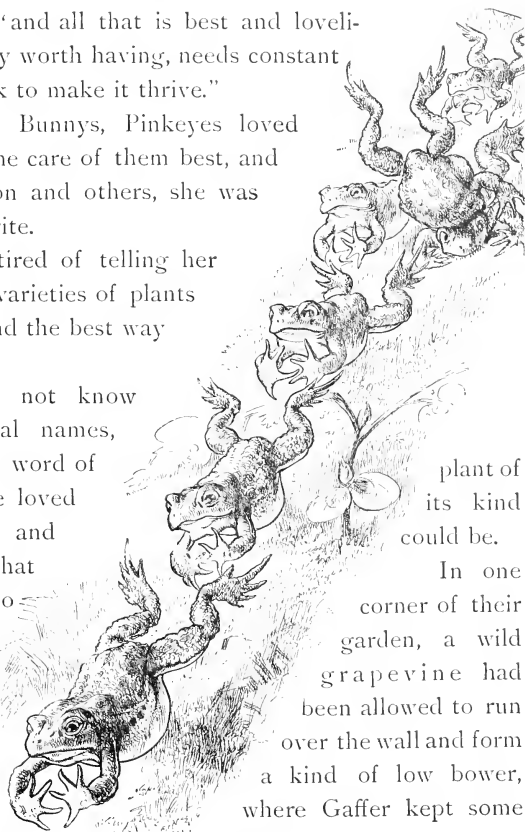
Gaffer did not know their botanical names, nor any other word of Latin, but he loved the plants and knew just what each needed to make it grow or blossom and be all the best flower or

plant of its kind could be.

In one corner of their garden, a wild grapevine had been allowed to run over the wall and form a kind of low bower, where Gaffer kept some odd pets.



GAFFER'S WATCH-DOGS.



These pets were only toads, but Gaffer prized them, calling them his quiet watch-dogs.

They were not molested in their corner, nor among the plants, and Gaffer often amused the Bunnys by catching flies and feeding the toads, to make them tamer and more friendly, or for the fun of seeing them open their queer mouths, blink, and swallow the flies, or sit staring like a Chinese idol.

One day when they were all watching the toads, Cuddle-down said she did not like to see such ugly creatures among the lovely flowers.

Gaffer told her the toads were harmless, if not pretty, and, next to the birds, were his best helpers in destroying the insects and other pests of the vines.

Then Cousin Jack told them an old myth of the "Jewel in the Toad's Head," and added that Gaffer's toads were a good lesson, for beauty often shone through, where careless folks saw only the plain and commonplace.

Bunnyboy said he supposed it must be true if Cousin Jack said so, but that he failed to see any beauty shining through a toad, and Cousin Jack replied that there were a great many kinds of beauty, and that outward show was not a proof of inward grace.

"The flowers," said Cousin Jack, "teach us one lesson of beauty, and perhaps the toads another, for it is something to be useful and harmless in a world like ours."

"The real ugly things," said he, "are oftener found living in houses than out in the beautiful gardens and fields."

Browny asked him what things he meant, and he replied, "I did not really mean 'things,' but thoughts and motives, like deceit, selfishness, pride, and hatred."

Pinkeyes, who had been listening to all this, said she wondered if some of the little flies and bugs destroyed by the toads were not harmless and useful too, if only we knew the whole truth about them.

Gaffer coughed and looked at Cousin Jack, who seemed somewhat puzzled for a minute.

Presently he answered Pinkeyes by saying, "That is a good suggestion, my dear, and no doubt it is true, for the more we think about the wonders of the world we live in, the more we learn of their use and beauty."

Just then Mother Bunny came out with her sewing, to get a breath of the sweet summer air, and the Bunnys gave her the best seat in the shadiest nook, where she could watch them at their work.

Mother Bunny liked to work in the garden among the flowers, as well as the others, but found little time for this kind of recreation, for she was always busy in doing or planning for the rest of the household.

She often used the time spent with them in the garden as "a moment to do a little mending for the children," which really meant stitching a lot of love and patience over

all the worn and torn places in their clothing, that her four beloved little bunnies might be fresh and tidy every day in the week.

It was at her suggestion that Pinkeyes and Cuddledown picked all the freshest blossoms in their gardens every Wednesday morning, and carried them to the Flower Mission in the village, whence they were sent to cheer the sick-rooms and to gladden the hearts of the old and feeble in both villages.

The Bunnys always enjoyed "Mission Morning," as they called it, and though they never knew just where the flowers were sent, they felt sure, at least, that they made life brighter for some one, somewhere, for a little while.

CHAPTER VIII.

GAFFER'S BLUEBELL.

WHILE Bunnyboy and Brownny worked in the vegetable-garden, Pinkeyes and Cuddledown spent many hours among the flower-beds.

They all had learned to love out-of-door life, and seemed to enjoy hearing the birds singing at sunrise, and to feel all the other refreshing charms of a bright summer morning, quite as much when weeding an onion-bed, or tending the flower-plats, as when roaming idly in the fields.

The first crocus bed, which years before the Deacon had made for Pinkeyes, had become an annual feature of the south lawn, and this year she had given it to Cuddledown.

This little circular plat was not more than four feet across, but Gaffer had taken special care, before winter came, to stock it with bulbs and cover it with leaves and straw, to surprise Cuddledown, when she should begin to watch for the peeping buds of green in the early spring.

Gaffer had planned a change from the simple mound of crocus-blooms, by arranging a cluster of two dozen hyacinth-

bulbs in the centre, enclosed in a row of four dozen tulip-bulbs, with an outer row of six dozen crocuses for a border; and the surprise was complete, for he had kept his plan a secret from all but Cousin Jack, who had ordered the bulbs from the florist.

Cuddledown and the family were delighted when the April rains and sunshine let the secret out, and they saw the familiar crocus bed become a daily wonder of changing blossoms and beauty, which lasted until the tardier blooms of the garden had come.

They all thanked Gaffer for his thoughtfulness and pains, and many of the poor and sick in both villages were gladdened with these early blossoms from Cuddledown's flower-bed.

Some of these sad hearts and dull lives might never have known such messages of hope and comfort, but for the kind and tender heart of a simple gardener, who loved flowers and children.

Gaffer had been the gardener at Runwild Terrace only a few seasons, and the young Bunnys knew very little about his life before he came there to work.

He had been a workman in a mill, until he lost his health and had grown thin and pale, and was told by the Doctor he must get work to do out-of-doors in the fresh air and sunshine.

Deacon Bunny knew him and how unfortunate he had

been all his life, and kindly offered him the place to do the light work about the Terrace.

The Bunnys knew he had no family of his own, and could see that he was quiet and often sad, though he tried to be cheerful and seemed glad whenever they came to work with him in the garden.

They also noticed that he liked best of all the flowers a little bed of bluebells, which he watched and tended carefully and called his own.

Every Saturday night, when the bluebells were in bloom, the last thing he did before going to his home in the north village, was to pick a handful of the delicate blossoms to take with him.

He had given Pinkeyes a few of the young plants for her flower-bed, but had never offered any to the other Bunnys.

One Saturday afternoon, when there were no bluebells left on his own bed, Pinkeyes asked him if he would not like a bunch of her blossoms to carry home.

Gaffer thanked her and said he would take a few, for it was early in the season to stop leaving them on his way.

As they were alone in the garden, Pinkeyes asked him what he meant by "leaving them on the way?"

Gaffer quietly answered, "In the cemetery," and turned his face away.

The sadness in his voice and eyes touched Pinkeyes, and



GAFFER AND PINKEYES.

going up to him, she said, gently, "I am sorry I asked the question, for I did not mean to hurt you, Gaffer."

Without speaking, he bent down and kissed Pinkeyes on her forehead, and then leading her to a rustic seat near-by, he said, "I think I would like to tell you about her, dear, the one I carry the flowers to, my own Bluebell, over yonder."

Pinkeyes put her hand in his and kept very still while Gaffer told her the story of the little daughter he once had, whose name was Bluebell.

"Bluebell would have been about your age, if she had lived," said Gaffer, "and was wonderfully like you in many ways.

"She had the same gentle eyes, and a sweet, low voice, and loved the birds and flowers dearly, as you do.

"It sometimes seems as if I was really tending this garden for her, instead of your father, for we often talked about having just such a garden for our very own, when I should leave the mill.

"We were both of us poorly, most of the time, for the last few years she was with me.

"We had a good many sick days together, my Bluebell and I, and perhaps this drew us closer to each other, and made us more like mates, than if she had been strong enough to play with other children of her own age."

Gaffer had seemed to be speaking more to himself than

to Pinkeyes; but when he saw the tears of sympathy in her eyes, and felt her little hand tighten in his, he turned to her and said:

“There is a sweet side to suffering and sorrow, dear, for those who can share it together, which takes away a part of the pain.

“My Bluebell and I had many happy times together on a holiday or Sunday, when we were well enough to go sight-seeing, or for a ramble in the fields; but the times I remember best, and love to think of now, are the days and nights when we tried to comfort each other in our sickness and troubles.

“That is why I take the flowers on Saturday nights, for Sunday was the one day in the week that we called ‘our day,’ and we always managed to have a few flowers then, in the summer-time, though they were mostly wild ones.

“My Bluebell was more like a flower, herself, so frail and delicate, and fond of the sunshine.

“If we could have had more of the sunshine of life for her to grow in, perhaps we might have kept her longer.

“It may be I am selfish though to miss her so much, for Bluebell is safe from harm now, and happier than I could have made her here, for the little time I have to stay.

“If one of us must be left here alone, I am glad to be the one, for her sake.”

Gaffer’s voice had dropped almost to a whisper, but, try-

ing bravely to smile, he added, "Perhaps I have done wrong to tell you so much of my sorrow, but I will take your flowers to-night, and thank you heartily for them, as I am sure Bluebell would if she were here and knew how kind you have always been to Gaffer."

CHAPTER IX.

STRANGE VISITORS IN THE GARDEN.

THE flowers occupied only a part of the inclosure the Bunnys called their garden.

Beyond the flower-beds was a large field where Gaffer raised many vegetables for the home table.

Bunnyboy and Brownny each had a share in this field, and enjoyed planting, weeding, hoeing, and harvesting their own crops of vegetables.

The Deacon told them a little real work was a good thing for boys, and gave them all the land they could use, and all they could raise on it, for their own, to sell or give away.

Sometimes they sold a few early vegetables, or berries, but oftener found some poor family to make glad with a basket of fresh things of the Bunnys' own raising.

Later in the season they always saved some of each kind to send to the village Almoner as a Thanksgiving offering to the needy.

It was not a great deal to do, but the Bunnys enjoyed

BONNYBOY AND BROWNY TRY TO DRIVE THE GOATS OUT OF THE GARDEN.



thinking that they had done something with their own hands to make Thanksgiving-day more truly a day of thanksgiving for somebody in the world.

One morning, a few days after the talk about the toads, Bunnyboy went to the garden early to begin his work.

He found the gate wide open, and on going in he saw a mother-goat and two kids nibbling his young pea-vines.

Running back to the house, he called the other bunnies to come and help him drive out the goats.

They all came rushing into the garden, and then excitement began in earnest.

Each bunny ran shouting after the goats, and the terrified kids dashed first one way, and then another, over the beds and vines, half wild with fright, while the anxious Mother Nanny ran helplessly bleating after them.

Round and round the garden they went, dashing in every direction but the right one, toward the gate, until nearly every bed had been trampled by their sharp hoofs, and the poor creatures were panting with fear and distress.

Fortunately, Gaffer heard the din and racket and came to the rescue, before the garden was quite torn up.

Calling the bunnies to the gate, he told them to be quiet and keep out of sight, and let him catch the goats in a quieter and quicker way.

Gaffer then took a wooden measure with some coarse salt in it, and shaking it gently, he called in a low voice :

“Co-boss! Co-boss! Co-boss!” until the mother-goat came slowly up to him and, after a moment’s hesitation, began to lick the salt from his hand.

The kids soon followed their mother to the gate, and, in less than half the time the Bunnys had taken in trying to drive them out, Gaffer had coaxed them through the gate, and sent them trotting off to their pasture on the hill.

No one knew who had left the gate open, but suspicion fell on Brownny, as he was the last one to leave the garden the night before, and also because he was often heedless in little things.

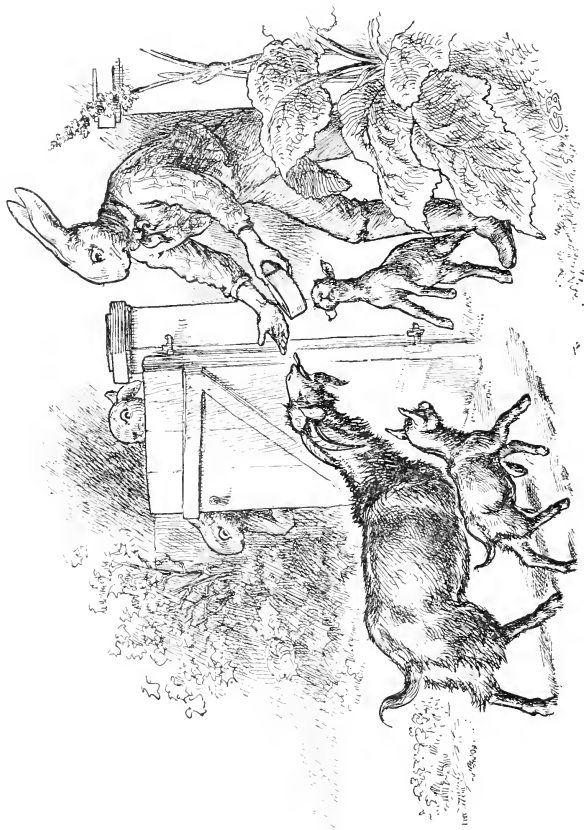
Cousin Jack said the goat might have opened the gate herself, for about the only thing an able-bodied goat could not do in the way of sight-seeing, was to climb a tree.

Gaffer looked at the havoc made in the garden, and said it would take a week to undo the mischief they had done in five minutes.

Cousin Jack turned to Gaffer and slyly asked him whom he meant by “they,”—the goats or the Bunnys? and Gaffer replied, “Both!”

Then Cousin Jack said, “Well, well! the goats did not know any better, and the Bunnys did the best they knew then.

“Another time,” said he, “I hope they will remember that the quietest way is usually the best way, and that



CAFFER COAXES THE GOATS THROUGH THE GATE.

bustle and noise and needless flourish are usually a waste of time and strength."

Gaffer said that he had always found that "Come," caught more goats than "Go," besides being an easier way.

Cousin Jack smiled, and told the Bunnys that the sight of those trampled and torn flower-beds and the example that Gaffer had shown them was a better lesson than he could teach from the text of, "How not to do it," and that each one of them would do well to make a note of it in their diaries.

CHAPTER X.

DEACON BUNNY BUYS A MULE.

DEACON BUNNY came home from a county fair, one day, leading a pony mule.

He was a small, dun-colored, peaceful-looking creature, of uncertain age, and seemed to be very docile and gentle.

The Bunnys were surprised and delighted, for they had never seen so cunning a little steed, and they had often teased their father to buy them a pony and village-cart for their own.

The Deacon did not tell the family all the reasons why he had bought the mule, but said the animal might do for the children to drive, and would be useful for light work about the place.

The Bunnys very nearly quarrelled about the name and the ownership of the mule, but at last agreed to call him "Donkey Dan," and to own him in common.

Cousin Jack looked him over carefully, and as he did not say much in his praise, the Deacon asked what was the matter with the mule.

Cousin Jack replied that he might be a good enough mule, what there was of him, but Cousin Jack was afraid he was not so amiable as he looked.

He told the Deacon he had seen very disagreeable kinds of mulishness hiding behind just such an outward show of meekness, and, though he might be mistaken, and hoped he was, the family likeness to vicious mules was very strong in Donkey Dan, especially about the eyes.

The Deacon said the man who sold him the mule told him that the mule had been a great pet in the family where he was raised, and was a perfect cosset.

"That is just what I was afraid of," said Cousin Jack, "and if the mule has any chronic faults, his bringing up is probably more than half to blame for them; however, we will wait and see."

The next day the Deacon bought a village-cart and harness, and the children took their first ride behind Donkey Dan, with Bunnyboy as a driver.

They had a jolly trip, and came home full of praise of Donkey Dan and the way he had behaved.

The Deacon joked Cousin Jack about having misjudged the mule, and he replied, that he was sorry if he had done the poor fellow any injustice, for, as a rule, he tried to think kindly of the meanest of God's creatures, instead of judging them hastily or harshly.

All went smoothly for several days, until one morning

Gaffer, the tailor who worked for Deacon Bunny, was told to take Donkey Dan and the cart and carry a bag of potatoes to the Widow Bear.

The potatoes were in the barn, and Gaffer tried to make the mule back the cart up to the barn-door, in order to load them easily, but Donkey Dan wouldn't "back!"

The harder Gaffer pulled on the reins, the more firmly the mule braced the other way, and the stubborn animal turned his head from side to side in a most provoking manner.

Then Gaffer tried to lead him about and bring the cart near the door, but this plan also failed.

Donkey Dan was stubborn and seemed to have made up his mind to have his own way, and to do just contrary to what he was asked to do.

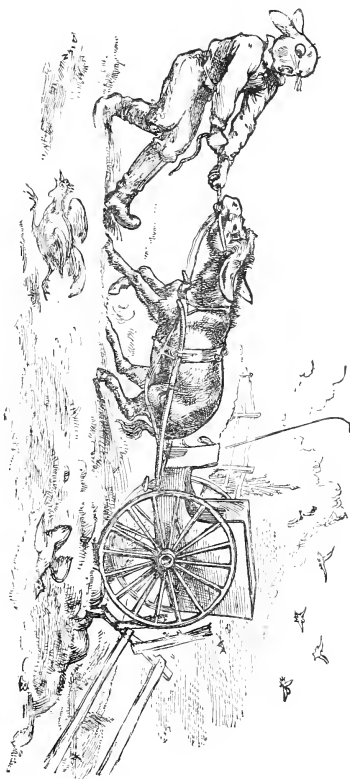
The barn stood on a hillside, and the roadway had been built up on the lower side to make it level and was supported by a stone wall. A light wooden railing protected the embankment, which rose eight or ten feet above the yard.

When Gaffer was trying to make him back, Donkey Dan was facing the bank. When he tried to lead him toward the barn the mule was, of course, facing the other way.

Gaffer chirruped and coaxed, and tried to pull him forward, but still the mule braced his feet and would not budge.

Suddenly, and without any warning or reason, Donkey Dan began to "back" with a great rush, and before Gaffer could hinder him, the wheels crashed through the frail fence,

GAFFER TRIES TO BRING MONKEY DAN TO THE BARN-DOOR.



and down the bank went the cart and donkey, backwards, both landing wrong side up in a heap below.

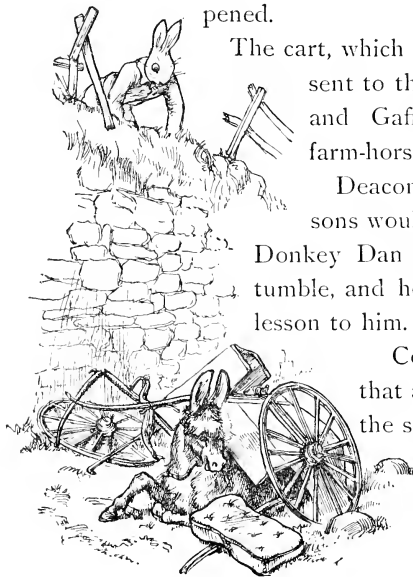
Gaffer was frightened and called for help, while the mule, stunned and probably too much surprised to move, lay there until the Deacon and Gaffer went to his aid.

Strange to say, Donkey Dan seemed to be unhurt, and when once more on his feet, he shook himself and began to nibble the grass as if nothing had happened.

The cart, which was badly broken, was sent to the shop to be repaired, and Gaffer took one of the farm-horses to do his errand.

Deacon Bunny said some persons would call it a miracle that Donkey Dan was not killed by his tumble, and he hoped it would be a lesson to him.

Cousin Jack suggested that a good way to prevent the same kind of "miracle" from happening again, would be to build a stronger and more suitable railing on top of the wall, and that



DONKEY DAN COMES TO GRIEF.

though Donkey Dan might know more than before his tumble, it was hardly worth while, even for a cosset mule, to go through so much to learn so little.

When the Bunnys came home from school they were greatly excited about the accident to their pet, and all wished to feed him lumps of sugar to show their sympathy.

Brownny declared that Gaffer must have abused Dan, or he would not have acted so badly.

The Deacon told him it was useless to try to explain why a mule was mulish, by blaming other folks, and that talking about it would not mend the cart nor the mule's manners.

Cousin Jack said the resignation of that mule as he lay there on the ground, and his self-satisfied expression when he had been helped out of the scrape, seemed almost Bunny-like.

Mother Bunny said she was glad and thankful none of the children were in the cart at the time, and that she should feel uneasy about them in the future if they went to ride with the mule.

Cousin Jack remarked quietly to her, that he was sorry *one* of the Bunnys had not seen the whole performance, for an object lesson in wilfulness and heedlessness might perhaps make it easier for her to restrain one of her troublesome comforts.

He did not say which of the Bunnys, but Mother Bunny

knew which one he meant, and you also may find out by reading the next chapter.

DONKEY DAN AND BROWNIE.

COUSIN JACK, who was very fond of all babies, used to say that the only things a baby didn't outgrow were a mother's love and patience, and it was almost a pity that they had to grow up at all.

Brownie was now seven years old, two years older than Cuddledown, the youngest, and he had been the pet of the family even after she had come to divide the honors.

All through his babyhood, until after he was able to go alone, he had been what is called a delicate child, never quite so rugged and vigorous as the others at the same ages.

For this reason he was more tenderly cared for and looked after, too often humored when he should have been pleasantly denied, and left to do hardly anything for himself.

In this way he acquired the habit of being waited upon, and of having other people use their eyes and ears and brains for him, instead of learning to use his own.

When he had become old enough to play out in the fresh air and sunshine with the other children, without being tied to a nursemaid's apron-string, he had a hard time in getting used to the sharp corners of the doorsteps, the rough edges of curbstones, and the gritty side of a brick or gravel walk, because it was so easy for him to fall

over anything that happened to be in his way, instead of using his eyes, or stopping to think for himself when in a hurry.

This change from a "hug-able," sweet-tempered, and comfortable little bundle of helplessness, to a heedless, self-willed, and unlucky youngster, was a great trial to the family, especially to his mother.

Not that Brownny was altogether a bad or stupid child, for he had a tender heart, and was kind and generous in many ways; but his wilfulness and blundering brought more trouble upon himself and others than there was any need for having, where every one else was kind and thoughtful and tried to teach him to be careful.

After Donkey Dan's tumble down the bank, whenever the Bunnys went to ride, Bunnyboy, who was eleven years old and strong for his age, was sent with them as driver.

This did not suit Brownny, for he thought he was old enough to drive himself. He kept on saying that Donkey Dan was all right, and that Gaffer was to blame for the accident at the barn.

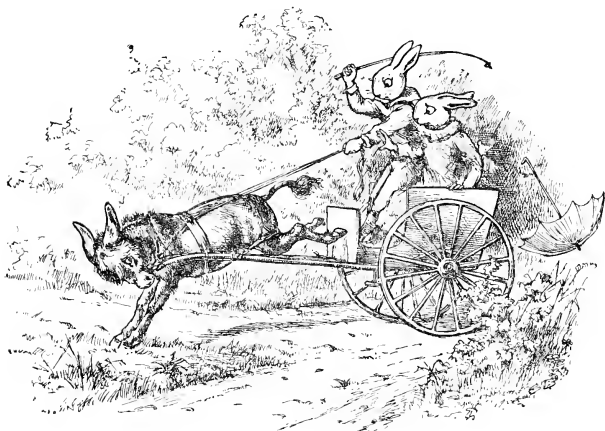
Bunnyboy had been cautioned, when driving, to keep in the broad highways, to avoid narrow lanes and steep places, and not to make the mule back.

As no accident happened, Brownny became more and more confident, and one Saturday afternoon, without asking leave, he harnessed the mule and drove out alone.

No one saw him start, as Mother Bunny was busy indoors, and the other Bunnys were away at play.

In driving through the village, Brownny met his sister Pinkeyes and asked her to ride home.

Instead of keeping on the highway, he turned into a by-



BROWNNY AND DONKEY DAN DISAGREE AS TO WHICH ROAD IS THE RIGHT ONE.

road; and though Pinkeyes told him he ought not to go that way, he said he knew what he was about, and kept on. In spite of the fact that Pinkeyes was two years older, she had been in the habit of yielding to Brownny; and to avoid a quarrel she said no more.

This by-road soon separated into two lanes, both leading toward home—one running over a hill, and the other around it.

Brownny wished to go over the hill, but Donkey Dan tried to take the other and easier road.

The harder Brownny pulled him to the right, the more the mule tried to go to the left, until Brownny, becoming impatient with the mule, lost his temper and struck Dan smartly with the whip, at the same time giving a strong jerk on the right rein.

Donkey Dan made one plunge forward and then stopped short, turned his head from side to side, and refused to go either way.

Another blow with the whip, and another jerk on the reins, and in a twinkling the mule whirled short about, upsetting the cart and throwing the children topsy-turvy into the gutter among the brambles and stones.

Donkey Dan then dashed down the road, but Brownny hung to the reins and was dragged quite a distance, until Neighbor Fox saw the runaway coming, and stopped the mule.

Brownny asked Neighbor Fox to go back with him and help his sister, for he feared she was hurt.

They found Pinkeyes sitting by the roadside, half stunned, and bleeding from a wound on her head, where she had fallen on a sharp stone.

Lifting her gently into the cart, and telling Pinkeyes to rest her head on Brownny's shoulder, Neighbor Fox led the mule and his sorry load home.

When the surgeon had come and sewed up the wound on Pinkeyes's head, he told the family the injury was serious, but, with quiet and good nursing, he hoped she would be out in a week or two.

Brownny was somewhat bruised by his rough-and-tumble dragging over the stony road, but the shame of it all, and his anxiety about Pinkeyes, made this seem a small matter.

For the sake of having his own heedless way, he had nearly killed his sister, grieved the whole family, and disgraced himself and Donkey Dan.

Brownny had been in little troubles before, from the same cause, but had never harmed anyone but himself, except that he hurt the feelings of those who loved him, and were sorry to see him growing up so wilful and reckless, in spite of all they could do or say.

Deacon Bunny had a long and earnest talk with him, and ended by telling him that he might go into the sick-room every morning and evening and look at his sister's pale face and bandaged head, with the sad mother watching by the bedside, if he felt that he needed any punishment to help him keep the lesson in mind.

Pinkeyes soon was well enough to sit up, and there never was a more devoted and loving brother than Brownny

tried to be, through all the days and weeks before she was able to play again.

Cousin Jack pitied Brownny, for he could see how keenly he suffered, and when he found a good opportunity he spoke with him about the accident.

He said he was glad Brownny had the nerve to hang on



DONKEY DAN'S SUCCESSOR.

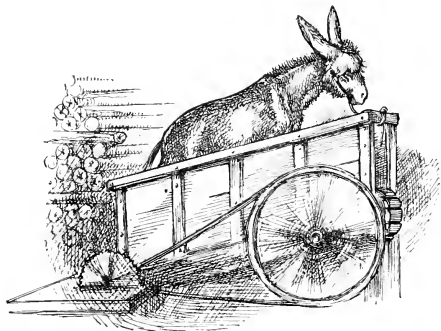
to the mule as he did, or some little child might have been run over, if they had reached the public highway, as would have happened before Neighbor Fox could have stopped them, but for the check of Brownny's weight on the mule's speed.

Cousin Jack tried to explain to him that wilfulness, or mulishness, might be pardonable in a mule, who had only instinct to guide him, but good sense ought to teach any one who had reason and a conscience, the difference between manly firmness and mulish obstinacy.

“Mix a little more caution with your strong will, and season it with kindness and forbearance,” said Cousin Jack, “and you can change your fault into the kind of virtue which rules the world.”

Donkey Dan and Gaffer soon had another fracas at the barn, and Mother Bunny begged the Deacon to sell the mule and buy a pet more tractable for family driving; and this was decided to be wise.

A few days later the Deacon bought the Bunnys a handsome, chubby, well-broken Shetland pony.



DONKEY DAN IS PUT INTO A PLACE WHERE HE MUST GO, WILLING OR UNWILLING.

He told the family that a man who owned a saw-mill run by horse-power, had taken Donkey Dan, and he would have no backing to do there, for the great flat wheel he walked on to drive the mill, only went one way, around and around, always in the same direction, with no opportunity for an argument that even a mule could enjoy.

Browny didn't change his nature all at once, but he did try to be a little less like a mule, in some ways, and whenever he was inclined to be headstrong, or heedless, Cousin Jack would slyly say, "I wonder what's become of Donkey Dan?"

CHAPTER XI.

COUSIN JACK'S STORY.



THE Bunnys had planned a chestnutting party for their Saturday holiday.

It was early in October and there had been a few sharp frosts to open the chestnut-burrs.

The glossy brown nuts were just peeping from their snug quarters, like tiny birds in a nest, and looked very tempting in their pale green and gold setting among the fading and falling leaves.

Every season brought its own pleasures for the Bunnys, from their first search for pussy-willows and arbutus in the spring, through all the changing months of flowers and fruits and summer picnics, to the gathering of the bright-colored autumn leaves, and the nutting parties; then came the coasting and skating, and the long winter evenings for reading and story-telling, until spring came again.

Next to a picnic, the Bunnys enjoyed a nutting party,

for, besides the fun, it seemed like a pleasant way of saying good-bye to the woods and the hedges, before they laid aside their beautiful leafy robes, and the winter came to bring them their snowy gowns for a long winter's sleep.

The Bunnys had waited a long time for the chestnuts to ripen, and for nearly a week they had been impatiently counting the days until Saturday should come round to give them a holiday from school.

When the longed-for day came at last, they woke in the morning to find the rain falling steadily, and they felt almost like crying over their disappointment.

Cousin Jack said it might clear off by noon ; but, in spite of their hoping and watching, the clouds thickened and the wind blew in fitful gusts, beating the pretty leaves from the trees, and making everything out-of-doors seem gloomy and uncomfortable.

When they heard the Deacon say it was "probably the Line-storm and might last a week," the Bunnys grumbled and said it was too bad to have their fun spoiled after waiting so long.

Cousin Jack saw their glum faces and said cheerily, "Well, well, I think we can bear the storm, if the poor birds and other shelterless creatures can ; and I never heard of their scolding about the weather. Besides," he added, "this storm is saving us trouble."

Bunnyboy asked if he did not mean making trouble

instead of saving it, and Cousin Jack replied, "I mean *saving* us trouble, for the best time to go chestnutting is after a hard storm, when the wind and rain have beaten off the nuts, and saved the trouble and risk of clubbing the trees or climbing them to knock off the opening burrs. We shall probably get there as soon as anybody," he added, "and find rare picking when we do."

This made the Bunnys a little more cheerful; and later in the day, when, tired of reading and playing games, they found Cousin Jack in a cosy corner in the library, they began to coax him for a story.

Cousin Jack was never happier than at such times, when, with Cuddledown on his knee, and the other Bunnys gathered around him, he would say, "Well, well, I will put on my thinking-cap and see what will come."

Cuddledown wished for a new story about the "good fairies," but Bunnyboy said he did not believe there were any real fairies, and asked Cousin Jack if he had ever seen any.

Cousin Jack said there were different kinds of fairies, but the only kind he had ever seen were what Bunnyboy called "real fairies," and he had known several in his life.

"Please tell us about the ones you have really seen," said Brownny.

Cousin Jack replied, "I will try to do so, but you must remember that my fairies are real, every-day fairies, and

not the story-book kind who are supposed to do impossible things and live in a fairy-land, instead of an every-day, rain or shine, world like ours."

Pinkeyes moved a little nearer to him and asked, "Is it wrong to like the story-book fairies? They always seem to be trying to help those who are in trouble, and they make me wish to be like them."

Cousin Jack gave her a very tender glance as he answered, "No harm at all, my dear, and I am glad you asked, for I did not mean to say anything against any kind of good influences which make us wish to be kinder or more thoughtful of others.

"I meant," said he, "only that I had met with some real, helpful fairies who live in the same world we live in, and," he added, with a smile, "I am sitting very near one of that kind now."

Brownny looked up and quickly said, "Oh, you mean Pinkeyes; but she is no fairy at all; she is only the best sister in all the world. Please begin the story!"

"Well, once upon a time—" said Cousin Jack.

"Oh, skip that back number," interrupted Bunnyboy, who was just beginning to use slang phrases and thought it knowing instead of vulgar.

"Well, what if it is?" asked Cousin Jack, good-naturedly. "Who knows how this story begins, if I do not?"

Bunnyboy said, "I beg your pardon, but could you

please begin at the real interesting part of the story and save time? I am tired of these opening chapters."

"I do not blame you," said Cousin Jack; "life is short and youth is impatient; let me begin again.

"Many years ago," he continued, "there was a harum-scarum young Bunny, whose story-name we will call Rab.

"Rab was an orphan; at least he thought he was, for the family with whom he lived told him his father and mother had died of a terrible fever in the South, when he was only three or four years old.

"Sometimes, at night, when Rab was lying awake, alone in the dark, he used to fancy he could remember living in another home very different from the place in which he now lived. The neighbors called his present home the 'Poor Farm.'

"Then there seemed to have been some one whom he called 'Papa,' who brought Rab toys and playthings, and carried him up and down stairs on his back, playing horse and rider.

"At such times he thought he could still remember the sweet face and gentle voice of some one who was always near him,—the first in the morning and the last at night to kiss him and call him her 'precious child.'

"Many a night when these fancies came into his mind, they made him feel so lonely and homesick that he would cry until he fell asleep and dream that he had found both

father and mother again and was the happiest Bunny in the world.

“But in the morning, when he woke up, all about him was so different from his dreams that they seemed as strange and far away as the stars that had gone with the night.

“In the daytime he was so busy doing odd jobs, running on errands, or getting into some new mischief, that he forgot all about any other troubles but his present ones.

“Rab was active and restless, and was almost sure to get into some kind of trouble if the day was long enough.

“If he was sent to rake up the yard and burn the rubbish, he built the bonfire so near the house or stables that when the wind changed, as it usually did, he had to call for help to put out the fire.

“If he was sent to hunt for hens' nests in the barn, he often tore his clothes by clambering into some out-of-the-way place under the roof to play at having a house of his own, or to carry out some other queer notion that came into his head.

“When he was told he might duck a certain hen in the trough, to break her of setting, he usually ducked the wrong hen, or fell into the water himself in his eagerness. The master of the farm used to say he would almost rather have a hurricane on the place once a week than to have that harum-scarum Rab try to do anything useful.

“Rab used to think that scolding or fault-finding was a way some persons chose to enjoy themselves, and that grumbling was so easy that almost anyone could do it and hardly make an effort ; and so he kept out of the way as much as possible.



RAB DUCKS THE WRONG HEN.

“One day, Rab found a place where a hen had made her nest in the dry grass, under some bushes, quite a long way from the barn.

“There was only one egg in the nest, and, as Rab was not sure it was a good one, he left it there and waited until

the next day.

“When he went again to look there was another egg in the nest, and as no one else knew about it, and because he thought it would be fun to keep the hen's secret with her, he said nothing, but watched from day to day until there were six large, white eggs in the nest.

“Rab knew that Peddler Coon, who came through the town with his cracker-cart every week, often took eggs from the neighbors in exchange for his crackers and cookies.

“Rab liked sweet-cakes as well as any other Bunny, but he rarely had a taste of any cakes or cookies at the farm.

“He knew how good Peddler Coon's cookies tasted, for

he had seen Rey Fox, and his sister Silva, buy them with pennies, and once Silva had given him some of hers.

“Every time he looked at the nest, he thought of Peddler Coon’s cookies and wondered how many he could buy with an egg. At first he only wished that the eggs belonged to him, and that he could buy cookies with them.

“Then he began to wonder if anyone would know if he should take one or two of them. Something in his heart kept whispering, ‘It is wrong—they are not yours—you must not take them,’ but at last he thought so much about the cookies that it seemed as if he must have some. The only way to get them was to rob the nest.

“He made it seem easier to himself by saying he would take only one, and that the hen would lay another the next day, and no one would know.

“The next time he heard Peddler Coon’s horn in the street he waited for an opportunity, and stealing quietly to the nest in the bushes he took an egg, and, hiding it carefully in his jacket-pocket, he ran off down street, out of sight from the house, to wait for the cart to come.



RAB STEALS AN EGG.

“Rab felt guilty, and it seemed to him as if every one

was watching him. This uncomfortable thought made him so excited that he forgot to look carefully before him as he ran.

“On turning a corner, and trying to look over his shoulder at the same time, to see whether the cart was coming, he tripped and fell flat upon the ground.

“The egg, which was still in his pocket, was crushed into a shapeless mass, and Rab knew his chance for cookies was gone, and that he was in difficulties besides.

“In trying to get the broken egg from his pocket, he smeared his hands and jacket ; and the more he tried the more the egg-stain spread, until it looked as if he had been trying to paint a golden sunset on one side of his jacket.

“What to do next, puzzled him. His first thought was to go back and try to explain the accident by telling a lie about how the egg came in his pocket.

“Rab never had told a lie in his life, but it now seemed to him that, having begun by stealing the egg, the easiest way out of the scrape was to lie.

“The more he thought about it, the harder the case seemed to grow. He wondered whether the master would believe his story if he made up one. If he did not believe it, would he flog him until he owned to the truth, and then flog him again for both stealing and lying?

“Then he began to pity himself, and to wish that he had a father or mother to help him out of his trouble.

"This made him wonder what they would think of their little Rab, if they were alive, and knew he was beginning to steal and tell lies, and the shame of it almost broke his heart.

"He crept behind a stone wall, out of sight, and lay down to have a good cry before deciding what to do."

"Where does the fairy come in? Isn't it almost time



HAZEL FAWN FINDS RAB.

for one?" asked Brownny, with his eyes full of sympathy for Rab.

"Yes," replied Cousin Jack, "the fairy was just coming that way, and she was one of the sweetest little fairies you ever heard of, in or out of a story-book.

“ She was a graceful young fairy, with a gentle face and large, tender, brown eyes, very much like your Mother Bunny’s.

“ As she was passing, she heard some one sobbing behind the low wall, and, stopping to look over the wall, she saw poor Rab lying there with the hot tears streaming down his face.

“ ‘What is the matter, little Bunny ; why are you hiding there and crying so bitterly?’ asked the fairy.

“ Rab brushed the tears away with the sleeve of his jacket, and replied, ‘ Because I am unhappy ; please go away !’

“ Reaching out her hand to him, the fairy said, ‘ That is a good reason why I should not go away, and leave you alone. If you are unhappy you must be in trouble, so please get up and tell me about it, and let me try to comfort you.’

“ The fairy’s manner was so kind and friendly that Rab thanked her, and, getting up from the ground, he said, ‘ You are very kind, but you do not know what I have done. I ought to go back to the farm and be flogged, instead of being comforted by you, and I will go now.’

“ ‘ Oh ! do not say that,’ said the fairy. ‘ If your trouble is so bad, you must come home with me and see my mother. She will help you if anyone can.’

“ Rab looked at his soiled jacket, and blushed as he said,

‘Oh, no! I am ashamed to be seen, or to speak to any one.’

“‘But you need not be afraid of my mother,’ replied the fairy; ‘she knows just what every one needs who is in trouble, so come with me and I will help you clean your jacket, and mother will tell you what is best to do.’

“Taking his hand, she urged him gently, and, almost in spite of himself, Rab yielded and went with her.

“On the way the fairy told him her name was Hazel Fawn, and that she lived in the Deer Cottage with her mother, Mrs. Deer.

“She did not ask him any questions, but when they reached the cottage she said simply to her mother, ‘Here’s a little Bunny who is in trouble. I thought you could help him if he would tell you about it, while I am cleaning his jacket.’

“Mother Deer said kindly: ‘I am glad to see you, Rab, for I have heard about you, and know where you live. You must trust me as you would your own mother, and let me help you just as she would wish to, if she were here.’

“Then she showed him where he could wash the egg-stains from his hands, and helped him take off his jacket.

“Hazel took the jacket and left the room, without waiting to hear what Rab should tell her mother, because she thought he might not wish to have anyone else hear his story.

“Mother Deer asked him to sit by her side, and told him not to worry about his jacket, for Hazel would soon have the stains washed off and they would have a little talk while the jacket was drying.

“‘It isn’t the jacket that troubles me,’ said Rab, ‘it is ever so much worse than egg-stains.’

“Then he bravely tried to hold back his tears while he told her the whole truth, from the day he first found the nest to his taking the egg, the accident which followed, and even about his first plan of telling a lie to save himself from being found out.

“There were tears in Mother Deer’s eyes as she said to him, ‘I am sorry for you, Rab, but it might be worse, and I am glad you came to me.

“‘It is hard for a little Bunny, like you, to begin life all alone, without a kind father or mother to watch over you, and I only wonder how such little homeless waifs do as well as you do.

“‘I have known many homes,’ Mother Deer continued, ‘where everything that love and patience could do was done for the little ones, and in spite of it all they would go astray and grieve everybody by their waywardness and wrong-doing.’

“Rab hid his face in her lap and cried softly, but Mother Deer took his hand in hers and said cheerfully, ‘You must not be discouraged; you have done wrong; but you can do

right about it, and I am sure you will, for you have been brave and honest to tell me the truth, and have not tried to spare yourself as many might have done.

“‘Now, I will tell you what we will do. I will write a note to the master of the farm and tell him what I think of a Bunny who wishes to do right, and you must go to him and tell the whole story, just as you have told it to me.

“‘Whatever he may think best to do about it, you must bear as bravely as you can, for that is your part of the matter.

“‘It is not always easy,’ Mother Deer went on, ‘to be brave when one is right; but it takes more nerve and real courage to be brave and truthful when we know we are in the wrong.’

“Rab looked up into her kind face and said, ‘No one ever talked so to me before, and I will do just what you have told me to do, no matter what comes. I am not afraid of a flogging, now, if you will only think I do not mean to be bad any more.’

“Mother Deer kissed him and said, ‘You may be sure I will, Rab,’ and just then Hazel came in with the jacket, clean and dry, and a big bunch of grapes which she had saved for him.

“Hazel walked part of the way with him, as he went back to the farm, and when she bade him good-night, Rab said, ‘You and your mother must be my good fairies, for

no one else ever helped me out of my troubles as you have done.'

"Then Rab went directly to the master and told him all about finding the nest and what had followed, and gave him the note Mother Deer had written.

"The master read the note and then said, 'Well, youngster, you have told me a straight story, and if you will show me the nest, I will call it even for the broken egg.

"'I should not wonder,' he added, 'if it proved fortunate all round, after all. Mrs. Deer seems to think there is something in you besides mischief and thieving, and she says she would like to have you come and live with her, to work about the cottage, and go to school.'

"Rab did not know what to say, except, 'Thank you, sir,' but he went to bed, and said his "Now I lay me" with a truly thankful heart that night.

"A few days later Rab went to the Deer Cottage to live, and the two good fairies, who had helped him out of his trouble, made his new home so happy, for the next few years, that he grew to be a very different Bunny from the harum-scarum Rab of the Poor Farm."

"Is that all?" asked Brownie. Cousin Jack did not reply, but Cuddledown looked over to Bunnyboy and asked, "What do you think about 'real fairies' now?"

Bunnyboy answered, "I should like to know what became of Hazel Fawn."

"I thought so," said Cuddledown, "for you are always liking some one who is not your sister."

Bunnyboy blushed but said nothing, and Pinkeyes, who had sat quietly while the others asked questions, turned to Cousin Jack and said, "I think I know what you mean by calling Hazel and Mother Deer 'good fairies.' You mean that we can all be good fairies to others who are unfortunate or in any kind of trouble, if we try to be gentle and patient and helpful when we have a chance."

Cousin Jack nudged Brownny, and slyly asked, "Who said Pinkeyes was no fairy at all? If it takes a rogue to find out a rogue, surely a fairy is the best one to find out another fairy, and Pinkeyes is right."

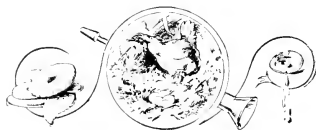
Then, turning to Pinkeyes, he said, "That is just what the story means, if it means anything."

Brownny fidgeted a minute, and then asked Cousin Jack, "How did you find out all about this Rab? Did you ever know such a Bunny?"

"That is a secret," said Cousin Jack, "which perhaps I will tell you some other time. All I will say now is that Mother Deer and Hazel Fawn were not the only 'good fairies' who came into Rab's life to brighten and gladden his other dark days—just as this sunshine has come to cheer us, while I have been telling his story to you."

And, indeed, the dark clouds had rolled away and the sun was shining again, and the Bunnys forgot the disap-

pointment of the morning in making new plans for a chest-nutting party for another day.



CHAPTER XII.

RAB AT SCHOOL.



IN the way home from the chestnut-grove, the Bunnys talked over Cousin Jack's last story, and were curious to know what became of Rab and Hazel Fawn.

Cousin Jack well knew how to keep a secret, but to satisfy them he offered to tell them about Rab's

school-days, sometime.

That evening, when the Bunnys heard Deacon and Mother Bunny say they were going out to make a few neighborly calls, they put Cousin Jack's arm-chair in the cozy corner again, and asked him to tell them the story about Rab at school. So he began :

"When Rab left the Poor Farm and went to live with Mother Deer and Hazel Fawn, he carried few things with him ; but he had a light heart and a smiling face, and he found a hearty welcome awaiting him at Deer Cottage.

"Rab was eager to work and try to repay Mother Deer's kindness to him, and there were many things a willing and active bunny could do to make himself useful, without always waiting to be asked.

"When Rab had been there a few weeks, and just before the fall term of school began, Mother Deer told Hazel Fawn she might have an afternoon party, and might invite her young friends to meet Rab, so that he could become acquainted with his new schoolmates.

"On the day of the party, Rab felt a little strange and shy at first, among so many neatly dressed and well-behaved playmates; but they were so friendly and jolly that he soon made friends with them all.

"After playing all the games they knew, and having a happy time, they formed a procession, by couples, and marched into the dining-room for refreshments.

"Rab marched with Silva Fox, next behind Hazel Fawn and Rey Fox, who were the leaders. Silva talked and smiled so pleasantly, that Rab thought it was more like a fairyland than like the world in which he had lived before coming to Deer Cottage.

"This is the way Rab's life began at Deer Cottage; and for the next few years, until he was about fifteen years old, he went to school summer and winter, studied hard, and tried his best to please Mother Deer, and to show his gratitude for all her love and care for him.

"You must not think Rab was a little angel-bunny, without faults," continued Cousin Jack, "for he had both a quick temper and a strong will of his own.

"Mother Deer knew this, and tried to help him to be gentle and reasonable, by being very patient and frank with him whenever he was resentful or stubborn about the little outside troubles that happened to him.

"The first real trouble he had at school grew out of a mischievous prank and a cowardly denial of it by Rey Fox.

"One winter, Schoolmaster Bear came to teach the boys' school. Neither Rab nor his mates liked the new master, for he rarely smiled, and his manner was hard and stern.

"They might have felt sorry for him had they known about his unhappy life when young and almost friendless,—how long he had struggled to get an education, and how much harder life was to him because he had never learned to be cheerful and patient with himself or others.

"They did not know this, and did not seem to care how much trouble they gave him.

"In the entry of the school-house there was a locker where the master hung his coat and hat, and one morning Rab went to the locker for a broom to sweep off the newly-fallen snow from the sliding-place.

"Rey Fox, in passing, found that Rab had left the door of the locker ajar, and, seeing the master's tall silk hat, just

for fun he filled the hat with snowballs, shut the door, and said nothing about it to any one.

“When the afternoon session began, Schoolmaster Bear



HE FILLED THE HAT WITH SNOWBALLS.

called the whole class in front of his desk, and with a frown he asked, ‘Which one of you played that trick with my hat this morning?’ No one answered.

“‘Who put the snowballs in my hat?’ he fiercely asked again. Still no answer.

“‘Very well,’ said he; ‘I will try another way to find out.’

“Turning to Rey Fox, who stood at the head of the class, he asked him, ‘Have you been to my locker to-day?’

“Rey was frightened, but promptly answered, ‘No, sir!’

“Then he put the same question to Rab, who blushed and answered, ‘I went to the locker at recess, to get the broom, but I did not touch your hat.’

“The master looked sharply at him, but passed on and asked each one in the class the question, and all the others answered, ‘No, sir!’

“Coming back to Rab the master said, ‘This looks bad for you, Rab Bunny; are you sure you are telling the truth?’

“Rab replied firmly but respectfully, ‘I did not do it.’

“‘Some one of you did it,’ growled the angry master, and taking hold of Rab’s shoulder, he said in a harsh, unpleasant tone, ‘So you are trying to deceive me, are you?’

“This was too much for Rab’s temper, and pushing the master’s hand from his shoulder, he answered hotly, ‘I told you the truth, and you must not accuse me of lying.’

“‘You are very impudent,’ said the master, ‘but I will teach you not to play your tricks on me, and also not to answer back to me when I reprove you.’

“With that he gave Rab a rough shaking and sent him to his seat in disgrace.

“When school closed, as Rab left the room the master said to him, ‘I trust you will mind your manners. Remember, there will be a day of reckoning for you, when I find out for certain that you are the guilty one,—as I think you are.’

“When Rab told Hazel Fawn about the trouble, she said, ‘I am sure you did not deserve to be punished, and I will ask mother to go to the master and tell him he was wrong in accusing you.’

“Rab said, ‘Thank you, Hazel, for taking my part, but please do not trouble Mother Deer about it, for it will all come out right, by and by.’

“‘Some one put the snowballs in the hat,’ said Rab, ‘and whoever did it must be a coward and a sneak, if he lets me bear the blame very long, after what happened this afternoon.’

“That night the weather changed, and the new snow melted and spoiled the coasting, but the next day the weather suddenly turned very cold and made the ice safe on the mill-pond.

“The ice was in fine condition, but Rab and his mates were afraid a snow-storm would come before Saturday to spoil the skating, and they all signed a letter to the master, asking him to give them a half-holiday on Wednesday afternoon, offering to make up the time by having an extra session on Saturday morning.

“The master had planned to go away on Friday evening for his Saturday holiday, and as he did not feel very pleasant about the hat trick, he refused the request, saying it was not convenient to grant it.

“There was much grumbling about the refusal, and some threatened to play truant.

“They all went skating after school, on Tuesday, and before going home to supper they talked over several ways for getting out of school the next day.

“Some one said a good way would be to stuff the chimney with a bag of wet hay, which would stop the draught and fill the room so full of smoke that no one could stay there; and besides, it would take the master a long time to find out the trouble and to undo the mischief, and they would have time for skating.

“Rey Fox said, ‘Let us draw cuts to see who shall stuff the chimney.’

“They all agreed; and when the straws were drawn, Rab had the shortest one and must stop up the chimney or ‘back out,’ and, though he had not favored the plan, he agreed to it and was not the one to back out.

“Before they separated, all promised that when the master should question them about the matter, each should answer, ‘I do not wish to tell,’ sticking to it through thick and thin, and sharing alike in whatever punishment followed.

“Rab never felt so guilty in his life as he did that even-

ing, when he made some excuse to go out for a while, leaving Mother Deer and Hazel Fawn alone in the cozy library, without a thought of the mischief their quiet Rab was meaning to do.



RAB STUFFS THE CHIMNEY.

“The school-house stood in a lonely and sheltered place, and Rab made short work of his task. Wetting an armful of hay he filled an old bag with it, and taking a light ladder from the barn, he made a quick trip to the school-house.

“With the help of the ladder he climbed first upon the shed, and then to the ridge-pole, and pushed the bag into the open chimney-top.

“Then with a stout pole he pushed the bag down the chimney, well out of sight, and the silly trick was well done.

“When he returned to the cottage, the library seemed brighter and pleasanter than ever, but when he said good-night to Hazel and her mother, he felt as if he had, in some way, done them a wrong, in doing the mischief which was meant only to beat the master and have some fun.

“The next morning, when Schoolmaster Bear came, the school-room was full of smoke, and he tried his best to find out why the smoke poured into the room instead of going up the chimney.

“At last he said there could be no school until afternoon, and in less than five minutes the mill-pond was fairly alive with skaters, while the master spent half the forenoon in cleaning out the stove-pipe and hunting for the cause of the trouble.

“One of the School Committee came to see what was the matter, and he sent for Mason Beaver, who soon found out why the chimney did not draw, and pulled up the bag of hay with a long pole and hook.

“When Rab and his mates heard the bell for afternoon school, they went in and found the master, and all the School Committee, waiting to question them.

“Placing the class in a row, the master questioned each in his turn, and each answered, according to the agreement, ‘I do not wish to tell,’ and no reasoning nor threatening could bring any more satisfactory reply.

“Just when Rab began to feel sure his mates would all keep the secret, Mason Beaver came in and said: ‘Here is a wet mitten I found in the hay-bag; perhaps the one who packed the chimney knows where its mate is.’

“The mitten was a fur-trimmed one, and its mate was in Rab’s pocket.

“The master knew the owner at once, for he had often noticed Rab’s handsome mittens, which were unlike any others in the class.

“In less than a minute he had found and compared with the wet one the mitten in Rab’s pocket, and the proof seemed complete.

“Seizing Rab by the collar of his jacket, he said, ‘So, so! Rab Bunny, I have caught you at last. This is your work, is it? Take off your jacket, and we will see how you will enjoy a double flogging, one for this, and another which I owe you for spoiling my hat!’

“The master went to his desk and took out a long, black strap, but before he could use it little Honorbright Squirrel, the youngest and smallest of the class, stepped to the front and said:

“‘If you please, sir, Rab is no more to blame than the

rest of us ; every one of us is in the scrape ; we all planned it together and drew cuts to see who should pack the chimney.’

“ ‘Then I will flog him for spoiling my hat and denying it, and punish the rest of you afterward,’ said the angry master.

“ Rab had stood there without saying a word in his own defense, but when the master again accused him his eyes flashed angrily ; but he kept back his temper and said quietly, ‘ I may have been saucy the other day, but I told the truth ; I did not spoil your hat.’

“ ‘No more words to me, you young mischief-maker ; you deserve punishment and you shall have it,’ said the master, and he caught Rab by the collar.

“ Rey Fox, who had kept silent through the whole scene, though he knew a word from him would set the matter right, still hesitated ; but at last he managed to say in a frightened manner, ‘ Rab did not put the snowballs in your hat. I put them there, sir, and I am sorry.’

“ When Rey said this, Schoolmaster Bear turned upon him fiercely ; but one of the committee said to the master, ‘ There seems to be some trouble or misunderstanding in this school ; perhaps it would be well to dismiss the class for half an hour, and talk the matter over with us.’

“ Then the committeeman turned to them and reproved them for wasting their opportunities, and said their conduct would be reported to their parents for punishment.

"Rab and his mates never knew what passed between the master and the committee, but the next day a notice was read before the class, saying that the usual half-holiday on Wednesday would not be given them for a month.

"This was a hard punishment, in addition to that they received at home, and they owned to each other they paid a big price for their fun, and had but little fun after all.

"Rab made a confession of the whole matter to Mother Deer, and he felt so ashamed and miserable because it made her unhappy and anxious about him for a long time, that he tried his best never to grieve her again."

"What about Rey Fox?" asked Bunnyboy.

"I never knew," said Cousin Jack. "But you may be sure that lying and cowardice always bring punishment, soon or late, and I know Rey Fox never held the confidence and respect of his mates after that day."

"I am glad he owned up and let Rab out of the hat scrape," said Pinkeyes. "We must give him credit for that, must we not, Cousin Jack?"

"Yes," replied Cousin Jack, "though 'Better late than never' is cheap excuse for shirking, and 'Truth first, last, and always' is a better rule."

Then, suddenly pretending to be surprised, Cousin Jack exclaimed, "Is that a yawn I see before me, spreading over Brownny's face?"

Brownny promptly said, "I'm not yawning ; I'm waiting for the rest ; what comes next ?"

"Bedtime for the Bunnys comes next and comes now !" replied Cousin Jack, "for here is poor Cuddledown tired out and sound asleep in my arms. So let us all say, 'Good-night, and pleasant dreams !' "

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BUNNYS' THANKSGIVING STORIES.



HERE were always many needy families about whom Mother Bunny could tell when the Bunnys asked her advice in making out their lists, and they often wondered how it happened that such a quiet home-body as their mother knew so very much about the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate folk in the North Village, and what they needed to help them through the winter.

The Deacon was always willing the Bunnys should give away all the things they raised in their own part of the garden, if they wished to do so.

This year the Bunnys had a large bin of vegetables and several barrels of apples of their own.

These were chiefly "windfalls," which they had gathered on shares, the Deacon having told them they might have one-half of all they could find on the ground in the orchard

before the time came for picking the late fruit from the trees.

The week before Thanksgiving Day, the Bunnys had great fun in filling the baskets and bags and labelling them for Gaffer to deliver on Saturday, when they could go with him and see that no mistakes were made in finding the right places.

The Widow Bear and old Grandmother Coon were Bunnyboy's favorites, and each had an extra parcel from his stock.

They found the Widow Bear living in a much more comfortable place than the old hovel, and she told them that Tuffy was a good and helpful son, and his wages helped her to clothe the younger children and to keep them in school.



CUDDLEDOWN VISITS THE ORPHAN ASYLUM.

Grandmother Coon thanked Bunnyboy for his gifts, and

said the Bunnys were "growing up to be just like their father."

Cousin Jack repeated this remark to Mother Bunny, who seemed pleased to hear it.



BUNNYBOY'S GIFT TO THE WIDOW BEAR.

Mother Bunny said she was afraid the neighbors would spoil the children by praising them, but Cousin Jack said they were all sensible bunnies, "and besides," said he, "we

all need a little encouragement, now and then, to make us do our best another time."

Then he told her that the trip had given him a new idea about gardening—how to raise two crops a year from the same seed.

Brownny said that could not be done.

But Cousin Jack said, "The seed you planted in the spring yielded a good crop of vegetables, and now a wagon-load from your garden has yielded another harvest of happiness to others, as well as to yourselves."

At the tea-table on Wednesday evening the Deacon turned to Cousin Jack and said, "It is just ten years to-night since we re-christened Rab Bunny, is it not?"

Cousin Jack looked very happy as he replied, "Yes, Uncle, but I have not yet told the bunnies that part of Rab's story."

Something in Cousin Jack's voice and manner kept the bunnies quiet, until, after thinking a minute, he said, "Perhaps this evening will be a good time to finish Rab's story, for there is a Thanksgiving flavor about it which I am sure Rab will never forget so long as he lives."

So away went all the bunnies to the library.

Cousin Jack began the story in this way: "When Rab was about fifteen years old, sickness and trouble came to Mother Deer, and Rab felt that he must find some work to do.

"Schoolmaster Bear told Rab that he would help him

with his studies in the evening, and gave him a letter of recommendation.

“ In this letter he wrote that Rab was ‘ quick at figures and wrote a plain, neat hand,’ and also that he was ‘ prompt at his tasks, willing to learn, and a trustworthy boy.’

“ Mason Beaver’s brother, who was a civil-engineer, needed an assistant to carry the chain and help him about the office writing, and when Rab showed him the school-master’s letter and asked for work, he gave Rab the place on trial.

“ Rab was very happy and a little proud when he carried his first month’s earnings to Mother Deer and asked her to let him help her, now that she was in trouble.

“ Mother Deer was sorry to have Rab leave his school, but, as it seemed to be the only way to keep their pleasant home, they all made the best of it, and together shared the dark days as they had shared the brighter ones.

“ For more than a year, Rab’s earnings spared Mother Deer many anxious hours and bought her many comforts during her long sickness.

“ One sad day, when Hazel and Rab stood by Mother Deer’s bedside, to say good-bye to her for the last time in this world, she whispered to Rab, ‘ You have been like a son to me all these years. Be good to Hazel when I am gone ; be true to yourself ; be brave and do right, and all will be well.’ ”

Cousin Jack's voice was unsteady and his eyes were full of tears, but after a moment's silence he said :

"Well, well, we must not let Rab's griefs spoil our evening, for there were many strange things yet to happen to him."

Turning to Bunnyboy, he said, "You wished to know the other day, what became of Hazel Fawn, and I will tell you now.

"Kind relatives of her mother, who lived in a distant city, took Hazel home to live with them, where she grew up to be as lovely and gentle as her mother.

"Her name is Mrs. Deer now, and she is very proud of two little ones who call her Mother, and whose names are 'Hazel' and 'Rab,' in memory of the old days at Deer Cottage."

Bunnyboy asked, "Cousin Jack, where is Silva Fox?"

"You will be surprised," replied Cousin Jack, "when I tell you that you already know her. Silva is now Miss Fox, of the Orphans' Home, whom you met when we rescued Toddle Tumblekins Coon from the marsh."

This pleased the bunnies, and they talked about Silva until Brownny interrupted by asking, "What was Rab doing all this time?"

"To shorten the story," replied Cousin Jack, "we will skip a year of Rab's fitting himself to enter a Naval Academy.

"Kind friends promised to secure him an appointment to

enter this great school if he could pass the examination; and when he had succeeded in winning that prize, the world seemed very bright before him.

“Dressed in the handsome uniform of the navy, and among a jolly lot of mates of his own age, the new cadet

was as eager to excel in drilling, and ship-practice, and in his studies, as he had been to beat his old schoolmates in running, swimming, or skating.

“All went on well and smoothly for several months, but one day an accident happened, whereby he was stretched on a hospital bed, maimed and crippled.

“Instead of the grand life Rab had planned, which was

to be full of action and heroism, there he lay helpless, with the prospect before him of being only a disabled pensioner of the government he had hoped to serve.

“He had been injured, too, before he had seen any real service, and partly because of his own carelessness.

“In trying to fix a new fuse to an old torpedo-shell as an experiment, the charge exploded, and a fragment of iron injured his right knee.



RAB AS A CADET.

“The surgeons were kind and skilful, but they gave him no hope of his ever being able to do active service again.

“One day, as he lay in the hospital, brooding bitterly over his misfortunes, a visitor came to his bedside, and, after speaking kindly with him, she offered to write letters for him to his family or friends.

“The visitor was plainly dressed, and Rab noticed that the only ornament she wore was a patch of red cloth in the shape of a Greek cross, which was sewed to her dress.

“The big tears came into his eyes as he said to her, ‘I have no family and only one near friend in all the world, and I do not wish her to know yet that I am crippled and helpless.

“Then she told him her name was Sister Gazelle, and that she belonged to the Society of the Red Cross.

“Rab remembered then what the Red Cross meant; for he had read about this brave band, who went about the world nursing the sick and helping the unfortunate.

“Sister Gazelle’s manner was so quiet and friendly, that in answer to her questions Rab told her the story of his childhood and the little he could dimly remember of his father and mother.

“All he knew about his parents was the story told by the old nurse, who brought him away from his home in the South when he was a little child.

“Sister Gazelle became very much interested when he

spoke of his Southern home, and asked him what the nurse had said.

“Rab replied that she told the master at the Poor Farm that he was Dr. Jack Bunny’s son, and his father and mother were both dying of the terrible fever when they had sent her away with the child to save his life.

“When Rab had finished speaking, the Sister took his hand in hers and said : ‘Cadet Bunny, it is very strange, but I know more of your sad history than you know yourself, for I heard it from your own mother only a few years ago.’

“Rab was so surprised and delighted that he could hardly believe he was not dreaming, and he cried out, ‘Is it true? Have you seen my mother, and is she still alive?’

“The eagerness in his voice and the trembling hope in his eyes made it hard for the kind Sister to tell him that he had no mother living, but with great gentleness she said :

“‘I am sorry to give you more pain, but your dear mother wore the Red Cross for several years after your brave father’s death, and at last laid down her life, as he had done, in caring for the sick and suffering.’

“Then the Sister told him how often and fondly his mother had spoken of him, and how long and patiently she had tried to find some trace of him, or of the nurse in

whose care he had been sent to his father's brother in the North, at the time his father died.

"The only word that ever came to her was from this brother, who wrote her that the nurse must have lost her way with the child, for no trace of either could be found.

"While she lived, the sorrowing mother never quite gave up hope of finding her child, and so she toiled on from hospital to hospital, always searching for some one who could tell her the fate of the little one.

"Then came her last sickness, when Sister Gazelle had met her and cared for her until the end.

"Rab listened as only a lonely orphan could listen, who heard for the first time about his own mother's love and sorrow for him, until at last the good Sister said she must not talk with him any more that day, but would come again in the morning and bring him the pictures she had of both his father and mother.

"Cheered by her kind words and hopeful plans for his future, Rab began to feel that there might yet be a place for even a cripple, who was willing to make the best of his lot in life and to try to be cheerful about it.

"As the days and weeks went by, he grew stronger and was able to get out-of-doors on his crutches to practice what he called 'A lame dog's arithmetic, putting down three and carrying one,'—as he hopped about the yard.

“One morning, a few days before Thanksgiving Day, Sister Gazelle came again, and with her was a stranger.

“As Rab came toward them, the stranger gave him a quick, keen glance from head to foot, and then placing both hands on Rab’s shoulders, he said heartily:

“‘So I have found you at last! You are Doctor Jack’s boy, and no mistake! I am your uncle.’

“When the first surprise of their joyful meeting was over they all sat down, while the smiling Sister told Rab how she had found his uncle by advertising in the newspapers of the North, asking the brother of Dr. Jack Bunny to send her his address.

“The brother had seen the advertisement, and the kind uncle had come to take him to his own home in the country, several hundred miles farther north than Rab had ever been.

“The next day all the arrangements were made for Cadet Bunny to begin a new life with his own kindred.

“On the evening before Thanksgiving Day, after a long ride in the cars, Rab and his uncle arrived at his new home, where for ten happy years he found enough to make him glad and thankful every day of his life.”

“Where is Rab now, and what was his uncle’s name?” asked Bunnyboy, with a wise expression.

Cousin Jack replied slowly: “I thought you had guessed my secret by this time, but if you have not, I can say only

that the last I knew of Rab, he was living with his good friends at Runwild Terrace, spending a great deal of time telling stories to a lot of good-natured Bunnys; and that his uncle's name was Deacon Bunny."

"I thought so, a long time ago," said Pinkeyes, "but I did not dare to say it, because your name is not Rab."

"Rab was only a nickname," said Cousin Jack, "which was changed to Jack, my real name, when I came to live with my uncle and aunt, just ten years ago to-night."

Then the bunnies were so noisy, talking to and hugging Cousin Jack, that the Deacon and Mother Bunny came into the library.

"Where is Sister Gazelle now?" asked Pinkeyes.

"Your mother had a letter from her to-day, and perhaps she will tell us," replied Cousin Jack.

"Sister Gazelle is still wearing the Red Cross," said Mother Bunny.

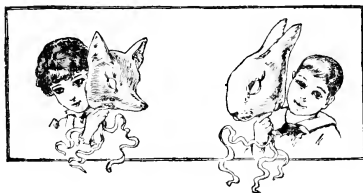
Then she added, "I have a surprise for you, too; for Sister Gazelle is coming to-morrow to visit us, and I have invited Miss Silva Fox to meet her and dine with us."

The bunnies were doubly surprised and pleased with this news, and Pinkeyes said, "How strange it is that Sister Gazelle found our Cousin Jack for us, and Cousin Jack found our Cuddledown!"

"That is just what I was thinking about," said Bunny-boy; "for if it had not been for her kindness we might not

have had either Cuddledown or Cousin Jack with us now."

Then the Deacon looked at his watch and said: "Come, the story is done, and it is time all you bunnies were asleep, for to-morrow will be a busy day if we are as thankful as we should be for the blessings we enjoy."



CHAPTER XIV.

BASEBALL AND SPRING TRAINING AT RUNWILD TERRACE.



NOTHER spring had come and May-day was near at hand.

Runwild Terrace, the sunny, hillside home of the Bunny family, grew lovelier every year, "setting a good example to the bunnies," as Deacon Bunny used to remark, when his neighbors wondered why he spent so much of his own and Gardener Gaffer's time in caring for the lawn and shrubbery.

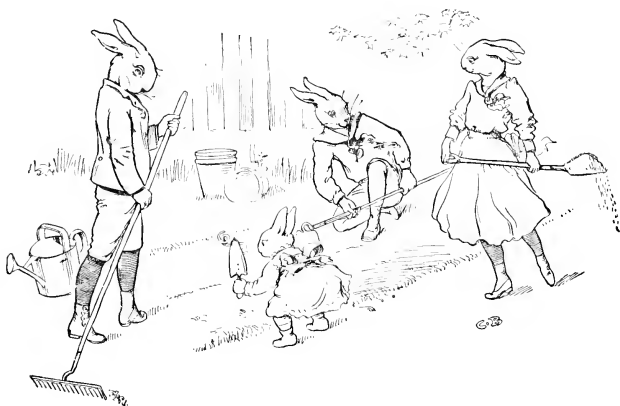
Already the lawns and orchards had put on their new spring suits of green, with golden dandelion buttons, and clusters of cherry blossoms for a May-day crown, as if they were all ready for a grand holiday-party, and were only waiting to celebrate the summer's birthday.

All the fields and hedges were smiling a welcome to the bluebirds and robins, and seemed to be coaxing the drowsy bees to come out into the glad spring sunshine, where they could be busy and happy once more, with all the other new life around them.

Weeks before, the shy arbutus had caught a glimpse of the warmer skies, and had heard the pussy-willows whispering to their gentle neighbors, the white birches, their wonderful message: "The spring is here; summer is coming; awake, live, grow, and be glad."

The bunnies, too, had heard the message and were happy.

There was no good reason why the bunnies should not



BUNNIES MAKING THEIR GARDEN.

be happy the whole year round, for their own dear home circle was still unbroken; they had a village full of kind friends and playmates, and were blest with good health, watchful care, and fairly amiable dispositions.

There was, however, something about the beauty and wonder of spring-time which woke in their hearts a healthy longing for the stirring out-of-doors sports and games, making them feel as if a new kind of gladness had just been born into the world.

Each new spring was as welcome and as full of wonderful surprises to these young bunnies as if the warm sunshine and the balmy air of the fields were the first they had ever known.

This year the real, springlike weather came earlier than usual, and very soon after the frost was out of the ground Bunnyboy had reorganized his military company, under the new name of "The Runwild Rangers," and Brownny had been chosen captain of the "Terrace Baseball Nine."

One morning, when Bunnyboy came in late to breakfast, he explained his tardiness by saying that he had been trying to find the best place for a parade-ground; and looking over at his mother, he added that he never knew how glad he was to be alive until he had heard the robins and blue-birds singing in the orchard at sunrise.

Bunnyboy knew that his mother Bunny had never outgrown her love and sympathy for all the gentle influences of out-of-door life, and he said this partly because he really felt it, and partly to see the smile of approval, which always followed any such reference, by her bunnies, to her life-long friends and companions, the birds and flowers.

The Deacon's face wore a different kind of a smile as he looked up from his newspaper and remarked: "Ahem! Better make a note of that sentiment, Bunnyboy; it may be a trifle threadbare, but you will find it handy when you begin to patch up a spring poem." The Deacon was as much a lover of nature as any member of the family, but the faintest trace of humbug made him shiver. He may have thought Bunnyboy was shamming sentiment for a purpose, and the good Deacon's hatred of shams of any kind, made him seem a little unsympathetic at times.

After a moment's pause, he looked straight at Brownny and added: "The initials of those robins and bluebirds remind me of 'Rangers' and 'Baseball,' and I wish you both distinctly to understand that pasture-land is good enough for playgrounds this year. That 'diamond field' is coming out of my best mowing-patch to-day!"

"That settles the question, Brownny," said Cousin Jack; "call your nine together this afternoon, and we will move the ball plates and lay out a new diamond in the south pasture before the haying season is upon us, if your father does not object."

"Take the south pasture and welcome," replied the Deacon, good-naturedly, "it comes as near being worthless as anything I own in this neighborhood. You may, however, be able to raise there a crop of blistered hands and broken fingers, if you let Brownny's nine use those cobbles-

stone 'league balls' they were practicing with the other day."

"Well, well," replied Cousin Jack, "I will admit that the regulation ball is a trifle rocky, and a bit dangerous in unskilful hands; but when you bar out the elements of risk or danger from a game, you spoil half the fun. Practice sharpens the players' wits, and the hard ball teaches nerve and pluck, and puts a premium on skill and self-reliance. Baseballs, as well as 'times' have changed since you were a harum-scarum bunny yourself, Deacon."



THE "TERRORS" PRACTICE.

"All right," laughingly replied the Deacon, "go right on with your field music, but do not ask me to umpire the games. I prefer the unmaimed state of nature to these modern improvements, if it is all the same to this family." Brownny jokingly called out suddenly, "Game

called at three o'clock sharp; Deacon Bunny umpire!" and peeping slyly around the corner of the newspaper roguishly added: "There is a stone wall in the pasture, father; perhaps you would like to hide behind it and hear my side shout and cheer when we get on to Brindle Bear's 'double curves' this afternoon."

The Deacon tried to put on a severe frown as he replied : “ Who taught you to make sport of your father's infirmities, you young chatterbox ? ” and, turning to Cousin Jack, he added : “ This, I suppose is a specimen of the ‘ self-reliance ’ inspired by baseball. O youth, thy name is levity now-a-days.”

Mother Bunny at this point broke the awful pause which followed the Deacon's remark, by gently reminding the family that the flower-beds were waiting, and that Pink-eyes and Cuddledown needed the help of a couple of strong young bunnies with spades for a few hours before the baseball exercises were opened for the day ; whereupon the Deacon and Cousin Jack went to the office, and the four bunnies were soon busily sharing the pleasant task of spading, raking and planting in their part of the garden.

CHAPTER XV.

TRouble BETWEEN THE CAPTAINS.

BROWNy was naturally a baseball enthusiast, and felt as much interest in the success of the ball team as Bunnyboy did in his military company.

When Browny became the captain of the "Terrace Nine," or "The Terrors," as they were sometimes nicknamed by the villagers, Cousin Jack foresaw a likelihood of trouble ahead, for nearly all of the ball nine were also members of Bunnyboy's "Rangers."

Company drills and baseball practice were more than likely to conflict, unless both organizations and their captains were good-natured and reasonable in dividing the time between the two sports on the school half-holidays of Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Cousin Jack kindly cautioned both captains, and advised ball games for Saturdays only, leaving Wednesday afternoons open for the military parades and drilling.

Early in the season the Terrace nine had challenged the North Village nine to play a series of three games for the local championship.

Brindle Bear was the captain and pitcher of the rival team, which was made up of rugged material and known as "The Hustlers."

Tuffy Bear, Brindle's eldest brother, had worked steadily in the machine-shop ever since Cousin Jack had secured the chance for Tuffy to learn the trade.

Tuffy was noted as an all-round ball player, and was a favorite umpire. During his years of idleness he had given a good deal of time and enthusiasm to the science of pitching, catching and batting, and since his apprenticeship he had managed by working overtime, and by skill on piece-work, to get an occasional holiday and a chance to umpire the local games.

His judgment and firmness made his decisions respected by the players, and his reputation for both courage and muscle kept the lookers on from finding too much fault with the players or his rulings.

Tuffy had learned from his own experience that failure was not always a fault, nor success a virtue, and his theory was, that a player who did his best should be treated fairly, even though he failed to stop a "liner," or to hold a "hot ball," the chances being that not one of the noisy outside critics could do as well in the same place.

Cousin Jack had encouraged Tuffy in taking these well-earned hours for the recreation he liked best, because he knew how hard Tuffy had struggled with his inclination to

quit work and join a professional nine, every spring when the ball season opened.

Tuffy owned to Cousin Jack that it was an awful grind to stay in the shop, day after day, when everything outside seemed to be beckoning him away to the fields of baseball glory; but he also confessed that he could not forget the difference between the old hovel of his vagrant days, and the comfortable home which he had since helped to earn, and to keep for his mother and the younger children.

Cousin Jack always praised Tuffy's good resolutions and his habit of sticking to them, and in this way had helped him to put away the temptation and to try to be satisfied with the fun he could get out of the games between the "Hustlers" and the "Terrors."

One game of the series had been played and won by Brindle's nine, and the second game was planned for the first Saturday in May.

Tuffy had coached the "Hustlers" for the first game, which they had won, and to be fair he had promised to do the same by a squad from Brownny's nine on Wednesday afternoon, if they would come out for a little field practice.

Bunnyboy had agreed to put off the Rangers' street parade until four o'clock that afternoon, and with this understanding Brownny took his best batsmen and fielders over the river to the north village, near the place where Tuffy worked, in order to save him the loss of time and the

trouble of coming over to the ball-grounds in the south pasture.

Once engaged in their practice, the players forgot how quickly time flies when heart, head and hands are all given to work or play, and it was past four o'clock before any one remembered the agreement about the Rangers' parade.

When Brownny noticed how late they were playing he called a halt, and thanking Tuffy, took the squad on the double-quick back to the parade-grounds, where they found Bunnyboy and the other members of the company in line, waiting very impatiently for the tardy ball players.



"TAKE THAT BACK."

While Brownny was waiting to catch his breath, before apologizing to his brother for the delay, Bunnyboy came to his side and said in a low but unpleasant tone: "You are responsible for this, and I think you planned it on purpose to break up my parade."

Brownny was sensitive to blame of any kind, and as hot tempered as he was quick to apologize for a fault or to forgive.

The fierce manner and the unjust charge changed his readiness to explain, into a spirit of defiance, and with flashing eyes he faced his brother with the quick retort:

“Take it back, or I’ll——”

Bunnyboy scornfully turned his back and gave the order “Fall in!” to his companions, while Brownny, still flushed with resentment, silently left the pasture and returned to the Terrace, where he found Gaffer Hare, the gardener, at work alone, repairing the grape arbor.

CHAPTER XVI.

SHADOWS ON THE WALL. GAFFER'S STORY.

BROWNLY tried to seem careless and unconcerned when he joined Gaffer in the garden, but his face and manner betrayed him.

The happy, mischief-loving twinkle had gone from his eyes, and the harder he tried to assume an easy, natural manner, the more unlike the real Brownly he appeared.

Gaffer noticed the change at once, and asked, "Why are you not parading with the Rangers?"

Brownly tried to evade answering by asking questions about the work.

Gaffer made no reply, but watched his face so closely that Brownly, after some hesitation, bluntly replied :

"I have quit the company for good."

"Honorably discharged, I suppose," said Gaffer.

This was a poser, for Brownly had played soldier long enough to learn that a soldier's first duty is to obey his commander.

The last command given before he left the grounds was

his captain's orders to "fall in!" Instead of obeying he had fallen out, laying himself liable to discipline for disobedience, absence without leave, and possibly to the still more dishonorable charge of desertion.

Gaffer's words, "honorably discharged," struck home, and to justify himself Bunny again evaded a direct answer by saying, "Bunnyboy insulted me."

Gaffer soon drew from Brownny the whole story of the quarrel and its cause, and when he had finished Gaffer said very seriously, "It is all wrong, Brownny. Don't quarrel with your brother. Try to bear and forbear while you are young, or that quick temper of yours will haunt you with awful shadows all your life long, as I know to my sorrow."

Brownny remained silent until Gaffer quietly asked, "Did I ever tell you of my brother Sandy?"

"I think not," replied Brownny. "Did you quarrel with him?"

"Yes," replied Gaffer, "and it hurts me, even now, to think of it, though it is many years since I saw the first shadow on the walls of our little cabin. I can see it still, Brownny, though the cabin is gone, and only old Gaffer is left to remember—to remember!"

Gaffer's earnestness and the silence which followed these sadly-spoken words touched Brownny's heart, and in a softened tone he asked, "What was the shadow on the wall, Gaffer? Please tell me what you mean."

"It is not much of a story," replied Gaffer; "but you shall hear it, though it is only a blotted page from my book of life. It may help to keep you from spoiling yours.

"I was only a few years older than you are now," continued Gaffer, "when my two brothers and I were left to care for ourselves and each other. We had grown up together, and to keep together after our home was broken up we united our earnings and built a small cabin in a clearing, on the other side of the river, where the factories have since been built.

"My brother Sandy was the eldest, Dingy was a year or two younger, and I was 'the baby,' as they used to call me, in sport.

"We worked and lived and shared together, making the cabin our home, until the first harvest season was over, and then we began to make plans for keeping on in the same way during the winter.

"Each of us had a bunk, alongside the cabin wall, where we slept at night and kept the few things each called his own.

"One morning Sandy proposed a new scheme for the winter's work. Dingy objected to the plan and proposed another. Then they argued, each his own side, until both became angry and stubborn.

"Dingy offered to leave it to me to decide between them. Sandy did not like this, and said I was not old enough to set up my judgment against his. This was true, but it

made me angry, and joining with Dingy I foolishly taunted Sandy with trying to rule us by treating us as children.

“Hot words followed, quick and fast, until both Sandy and Dingy declared they would not live under the same roof another day. Hastily packing up their kits, both left the cabin in anger, saying I was welcome to the cabin and clearing.

“I could not believe they really meant to stay away, and so I kept on alone, every day expecting one or both would return, until near Christmas-time.

“Oh, those lonely days and nights, Brownny, in that old cabin, where I seemed to see only the dark shadows of the wrathful faces of my brothers on the bare walls above their empty bunks, and to hear the echoes still repeating the harsh, unbrotherly words.

“At last the loneliness and the haunting shadows became unbearable and I began a search for my brothers. I found Dingy at work in the village and begged of him to come back to the clearing and proposed that together we should try to find Sandy.

“Dingy returned with me and we did our best to find some trace of our brother, but Sandy never came back.

“Though Dingy and I often talked of him, and praised him for all his generous ways and hard work for us in the old days, though we longed for him, and sought for him, and tried to hide the shadows over his empty bunk with

kind thoughts and words, we both knew the shadows were there and Sandy was gone.

“We were not sorry when the time came for us to sell the clearing and to see a factory built upon the spot where our cabin stood.”

Gaffer paused for a moment, and then putting his hands kindly upon Brownny’s shoulders, he added: “Sandy died among strangers, because his own brothers quarrelled with him, and his younger brother knows now that a few kind, reasonable words would have kept us together and blotted out all the dark shadows on that old cabin wall.

“Never quarrel with your brother, Brownny. See, the Rangers are coming in from their parade ; go and make it up with Bunnyboy before the sun goes down, and try to keep all such gathering shadows from darkening your life as they have mine.”

CHAPTER XVII.

GETTING READY FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP.



AFFER'S story had calmed Brownny, and changed the raging tempest of wrath into a flood of quick repentance.

Over in the south pasture the sunlight lingered, and the old red oak, under which the Rangers made their headquarters, was casting long shadows over the parade-ground.

With a few words of thanks to Gaffer for the story, Brownny left the arbor and marched bravely back to the pasture, reaching the tree just in advance of the returning company.

As the Rangers halted, and before their captain had time to give the order to "Break ranks!" Brownny stepped forward and saluting Bunnyboy, said: "With your permission, Captain, I wish to apologize for my absence and will explain the delay."

It was now Bunnyboy's turn to flush, not so much in anger as in shame, for he knew that he had given Brownny

no chance to clear himself, and had made an ugly and insulting remark, which the company had not heard.

A feeling of pride as the elder, and a bit of vanity about his position as commander, kept Bunnyboy silent for a moment, until his better nature came to his aid and helped him to respond to Brown's frankness by returning his salute and saying, "I did not really mean what I said ; I take it all back."

Turning to the Rangers, Bunnyboy continued; "I hastily accused my brother of purposely delaying the parade. I ought to have known better, and to make amends I will excuse his 'absence without leave.' If you all think this is the best way to settle it let us give three cheers with a tiger for the ball nine and the Rangers and call it quits."

Off went the hats, out rang the loud cheers, and the setting sun saw only smiling and happy faces as it dropped behind the hills, while the shadows under the old red oak slowly faded out, leaving in their places soft, rosy gleams, reflected from the peaceful sky overhead, where the sun was still shining.

The next Saturday afternoon the second game was played between the Hustlers and the Terrace nine, and it proved an exciting contest.

Brown had made a few changes in the positions of the players, at Tuffy Bear's suggestion, after the field practice,

and the assignments for the next game of the series were as follows :

Brownny.....	Captain and Catcher
Chivy Woodchuck.....	Pitcher
Chub Woodchuck.....	First base
Spud Coon.....	Second base
Jack Beaver.....	Third base
Bunnyboy.....	Short stop
Chippy Squirrel.....	Right field
Fleetwood Fox.....	Centre field
Graybush Squirrel.....	Left field
Tuffy Bear, Umpire.	

Cousin Jack was present and had invited Deacon Bunny to come with him to see the game, but the Deacon had declined, saying that he was too busy, and would try to get through the day quietly in the office.

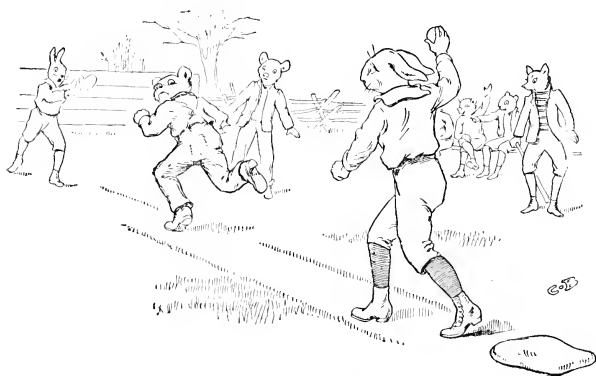
It made Cousin Jack and the Bunnies smile, when, before the last half of the game was reached, they saw the Deacon hovering along the roadside above the pasture, with a brush-scythe in hand, clipping here and there a clump of young alders, but evidently giving more time and attention to the game than to the hedge-rows.

When the game closed Brownny's side had scored a close victory, making the record a tie, with one more game to decide the championship.

Tuffy Bear had umpired the game with as little friction as possible where both sides were eager to win. When

Cousin Jack complimented Tuffy upon the fairness and firmness of his decisions, Tuffy remarked that an umpire was sure to be found fault with by one or both sides, but he was used to it and did not mind.

Cousin Jack replied that he had noticed the same one-sidedness in the great game of life, where zeal and enthu-



HUSTLERS VS. TERRACE.

siasm seemed to be strangely blind to everything but their own side of a question.

“That is just what ails these baseball players when I make a close ruling,” said Tuffy.

“Well, well,” replied Cousin Jack, “enthusiasm is the life of the game, and the world owes more to what may be called ‘one-eyed zeal’ than it is willing to own. It keeps

thought stirring, and can do but little harm so long as we have good sense and justice to depend upon, as umpires, in making the final decisions."

At the tea-table that evening the Deacon good-naturedly took his share of the joking about his sudden interest in baseball, and innocently asked Brownie if a new player had lately joined one of the nines.

Brownie answered that both nines were made up of old players, and asked why his father thought there was a stranger present.

The Deacon soberly replied: "I supposed I knew every youngster's name in both villages, but I heard a good deal of talk about some one you all call 'Betcher.' Who is Betcher?"

Both bunnies smiled at their father's seeming ignorance, but blushed when Mother Bunny, whose quick instinct had caught the meaning of the phrase, said earnestly: "I hope my bunnies have not disgraced themselves by betting on the result of a ball game, or any other sport."

This gave Cousin Jack the opportunity—which he seemed always to be waiting for—to help the bunnies out of their embarrassment by explaining that the words "Bet you" which the Deacon had heard and pretended to misunderstand, were only a common slang phrase which the eager players carelessly used to express their confidence, each in his own side. He then assured the family that

while he had any influence with the nines, there would be no such vulgar and foolish feature as "betting" on their games.

Mother Bunny looked relieved, and the Deacon quietly remarked: "This 'Betcher' seems to be neither useful nor ornamental, and might as well be dropped out of the game altogether. Betcher does not belong in good company."

Cousin Jack then changed the subject by remarking to the Deacon that he had a suggestion to make about the Hustlers, and would like to see him alone in the library before bedtime."

On the following Saturday, the date fixed for the last game of the series, a drizzling rain set in and the game was postponed to the next Saturday.

Again the weather proved stormy, and made another postponement necessary.

Both sides were now very impatient for the trial, and with Bunnyboy's consent to waive the Rangers' drill, Wednesday afternoon was agreed upon for the final game.

When the day came the game began promptly, but before it was half played the first thunder-storm of the season broke upon them and drove the nines from the field.

Brownny and Brindle then declared that the game should be played and the championship settled on the next Saturday, rain or shine.

This fourth Saturday fell on the 30th day of May, and in

their eagerness both captains had forgotten that the 30th was Memorial Day, the one day in the whole year which was set apart for the patriotic remembrance of the brave defenders of their country who had given their lives to preserve the blessings of the government under which they lived.

Nearly all of Brown's nine were not only members of the Rangers, but also belonged to the society of the "Loyal Sons," who always marched with the veterans' procession on Memorial Day, to decorate the monuments and the graves of their old comrades and fellow-soldiers in the great war which had occurred before the bunnies were born.

They all knew what the day meant, for the Rangers, when on parade, carried the same flag that marked each veteran's grave in the village cemetery, when Memorial Day returned with each returning spring.

When Brown came home to tea after the ball game, he was not in his usual good humor and began to grumble about the weather. His sisters, Pinkeyes and Cuddledown, were both interested in the success of Brown's nine, but when he told them that the third game would be played the next Saturday, rain or no rain, they exclaimed, "Oh, Brown! Baseball on Memorial Day?" "Why not?" asked Brown impatiently, adding in a despairing tone, "The weather has been against us ever since we began the series, and I am tired of postponements."

Cousin Jack avoided discussion by remarking, "Well, well, you have had bad luck, but we will talk over the matter later on; perhaps your nine is the gainer by the delay, for you are a little behind the Hustlers in practice games, and practice makes perfect, Brownny, if you have enough of it."

In spite of Cousin Jack's encouraging words, it was quite plain to him that the new complications between patriotic duty and baseball would need all his tact and philosophy to harmonize the situation, but with his usual hopefulness and confidence in the reasonableness and right-feeling of the bunnies, he left the question open for a friendly chat until Brownny should have had time to sleep off his disappointment.



PREPARING FOR MEMORIAL DAY.

He knew that Pinkeyes and Cuddledown had been busy with work and plans for getting as many flowers as possible for Memorial Day, and after a few questions about the garden, he gave them all something new to think about by promising to tell them in the morning about his little

scheme to interest the Deacon in giving the Hustlers a pleasant surprise before the week was out.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SURPRISE FOR THE HUSTLERS.

MEMORIAL DAY had come and gone; the championship game between the Hustlers and the Terrace nines had been played, lost, and won, but not on Memorial Day, as Brindle and Brownny had planned.

The surprise for the Hustlers, which Cousin Jack had arranged with Deacon Bunny, put the question in a new light and changed the programme, when Cousin Jack told the secret to the Bunnys on Thursday morning.

Bunnyboy's Rangers always appeared on parade in their last year's uniforms of dark-blue, with crimson sashes and gilt buttons, which gave a dignity to their youthful forms, and stirred their playmates with admiration, or, possibly, with envy.

Brownny's first ambition, when he was made captain of the Terrace nine, was to have the team handsomely uniformed. This involved more expense than the parents of some of the players thought necessary; but Brownny was in earnest, as usual, and held daily councils at home until a way had been found to carry out his purpose.

Like most sons of indulgent parents, Brownny had expected his father to help him out of the difficulty at once, by offering to buy the uniforms for the whole nine, in return for the honor of being the father of a baseball captain.

The Deacon listened with a good deal of patience while his son eloquently explained how much the glory and success of the team depended upon gorgeous apparel, but firmly declined to adopt the whole village, and closed the debate by remarking that his ambitious sons ought occasionally to remember that he was not a National bank.

Brownny then appealed to his mother, who suggested having "home-made" uniforms, if the Bunnys and the other members of the team would give a part of their pocket-money, for a few months, toward paying for the materials.

Cousin Jack proposed calling a special session of the sewing-circle, in the Terrace parlors, to be held with closed doors, and without the usual five o'clock tea drinking, until the uniforms were made.

The Deacon joined heartily in this part of the plan, and offered to advance the amount needed to buy the cloth, slyly remarking to Mother Bunny that he would come home early on the occasion, in order to see the practical workings of a genuine home missionary society.

Every member of the nine promptly pledged his monthly assessment, and the plan was speedily carried out by the

neighborly mothers and sisters of the players, whose willing hands made quick work of cutting and making nine neat and pretty suits of soft gray flannel.

Pinkeyes and her young friends took for their share of the task the cutting out of nine large and striking capital T's of blue cloth, which they sewed and neatly feather-stitched on to the breast-fronts, making the uniforms as complete and handsome as any Brownie or his mates had ever seen.

When the Terrace nine marched on to the ball field for the opening game of the series in their tidy outfits, the Hustlers had seemed to realize, for the first time, their own shabby appearance.

Their shabbiness was due in part to the fact that the Hustlers were the sons of hard-working mechanics or factory operatives in the North Village, whose families were apt to grow faster than their incomes, but this was not the only reason.

Habits of untidiness also grow faster than even thoughtful mothers can overcome with all their kind advice and patient stitches, unless their children will try to learn to be careful and thoughtful themselves.

It was plain to be seen, even by the Hustlers, that dirt did not improve the appearance of a partly outgrown, or a patched suit, and when they looked a little closer they discovered almost as great a contrast between the clean faces

and hands of their rivals and their own, as between the new uniforms and their own motley of shreds, patches and dried mud.

In spite of a few ill-natured remarks about "dudes," by one or two of the untidiest of the team, the Hustlers' hearts were fired with ambition to see themselves in uniforms, and soon after, Brindle called a council of his nine to see what they could do.

Tuffy Bear, who was present at this meeting, thought it was a wild scheme, but finally told his brother Brindle to ask Jack Bunny's advice about the matter, adding that Jack Bunny had a "level head," and was a willing and helpful friend to any one in a tight place.

This put new hope in the hearts of the Hustlers, and they were all eager to go at once, in a body, to ask him to get the uniforms for them.

Tuffy listened to their noisy and confident talk, until it seemed to him that every one of the Hustlers imagined Jack Bunny to be the owner of an open gold mine, who really needed their assistance in squandering his wealth.

This annoyed Tuffy, for he knew Jack Bunny's heart was richer than his purse, and that he worked hard for all he had to spend, or to give away.

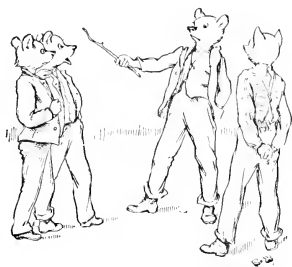
Suddenly hushing the chatter with a word of command, he startled the crowd by making the first speech of his life.

"Now listen to me," said Tuffy, "you all talk like

parrots, and with as little sense. You make me sorry I said anything about Jack Bunny. Don't you all know that one family can't do everything for a whole village full of folks who are poor, or sick or shiftless?

"Haven't you seen Jack Bunny, and the rest of that family, taking more interest in those who live in hovels, than your own folks take? Do you wish to ride a free horse to death?

"If any one of you Hustlers dares to go a begging to



TUFFY MAKES A SPEECH.

Jack Bunny, that Hustler will wish he had kicked himself home before he started, and will have me to settle with afterwards.

"If you expect to get something for nothing, you'll find it doesn't work—but I'll tell you what I will do.

"The strawberry season is coming on, and you are all big enough to work when school doesn't keep.

"I'll see Jack Bunny, and if he can make the Deacon believe that he can trust you to pick berries, and not eat more than you put in the baskets, perhaps you can get a chance to earn enough to pay for your uniforms before the season is over.

"If this suits you, just keep still about it, and let me see what Jack Bunny says."

When Tuffy finished his speech his eyes fairly sparkled with excitement, and every Hustler felt that he was standing in the presence of a born leader, and readily agreed to Tuffy's plans.

Tuffy Bear kept his promise by sending a note to Cousin Jack, asking for an interview on "private business."

Cousin Jack at first thought Tuffy was getting restless again, and made an early appointment to meet him at the store. When Tuffy came and had stated the case, Cousin Jack entered very cheerfully into the scheme, and said he was very confident the Deacon would be willing to give the Hustlers work when the time came. Before they parted, Cousin Jack also suggested that it might be possible to get the uniforms in advance, but cautioned Tuffy to keep his own counsel about that part of the plan, as the best way to avoid creating new difficulties or risking needless disappointment for others.

This was the surprise which Cousin Jack had kept until the Deacon had consented to the plan, and together they had arranged with a dealer to fit out the nine with dark blue, ready-made uniforms on Thursday morning, before Memorial Day.

The bunnies were all delighted with the news, and enjoyed talking of the pleasure the surprise would give the Hustlers as much as if some special good fortune had come to themselves.

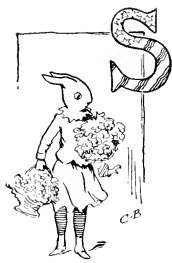
Brownny fairly bubbled over with excitement, and his sister Pinkeyes at once called her young friends together to make nine large initial H's of yellow flannel, to be worn by the Hustlers, the same as the T's on the uniforms of Brownny's team.

Brindle had been notified the night before, and each Hustler was fitted with a suit before school-time. Then the suit was sent to the Terrace to have the letters sewed on, all ready for delivery on Friday morning. Nine cleaner or happier faces never left the North Village than those of Brindle's nine, who came to the Terrace on Friday morning; and when they returned in the evening, wearing their new suits, to give three cheers for Deacon Bunny, their old play-fellows hardly recognized the trim and tidy figures of the happy Hustlers.

Cousin Jack remarked to Mother Bunny that the yellow initial looked "like a patch of sunshine," and Mother Bunny replied, softly: "I can see beautiful rays of the real sunshine of life, new and innocent gladness, lighting up all their young faces, and it makes my heart glad, both for them, and for us all."

CHAPTER XIX.

BASE BALL AND MEMORIAL DAY.



TILL another surprise was in store for the bunnies. Brownny and Brindle had already given up their hastily formed purpose of playing the championship game on Saturday, for several reasons, one of which was given by Bunnyboy, who said his Rangers, who belonged to Brownny's nine, would not feel like playing ball after the other duties of the day were over.

Another reason was that Cousin Jack, in his quiet talk with Brownny, had asked him if he did not think one whole day in the year really belonged to the sacred memories of "Decoration Day"—as it was sometimes called—undisturbed by the noisy gathering which would be called together by a ball game. Brownny's heart was wiser than his head, though his hasty impulses sometimes misled him, and after a moment's thought he replied that all the pennants ever won could not tempt him to carry out his first plan.

On Friday morning both Pinkeyes and Cuddledown were excused from attending school, and were planning a busy and pleasant day.

They were going with Mother Bunny and their neighbors to Veterans' Hall, where they were to spend the greater part of the day in making wreaths of myrtle and laurel leaves, and arranging the floral offerings of purple lilacs, white hawthorne and laurel blooms from the lawns and fields, and daintier bouquets of heliotrope, pansies, mignonette, and sweet peas from their gardens and green-houses.

While the family were discussing the supply of ever-greens which the bunnies had helped to gather the day before, Deacon Bunny turned to Bunnyboy and asked him how many of his military company would turn out to march in the procession on Saturday morning. Bunnyboy replied that every one of the Rangers had promised to report at headquarters at eight o'clock in full uniform.

"It has occurred to me," said the deacon, "that you might recruit your company, and double the number for one day by inviting the Hustlers, and those of Brownny's nine who are not Rangers, to join the procession as a second platoon."

"That is a capital idea," responded Bunnyboy; "how can it be managed?"

"Leave that to me," said Brownny, eagerly; "I'll see

Brindle and we will have all the outsiders on hand, in their baseball uniforms, on time, you bet !”

“ ‘Youbet’ and ‘Betcher’ are not included in the invitation,” dryly remarked the deacon.

“Beg your pardon,” said Brownny, with a blush, “I meant—without fail.”

“Where does Tuffy Bear come in ?” asked Bunnyboy.

“Tuffy is a ‘Loyal Son’ now, and commands the second division,” replied Cousin Jack. “Tuffy was promoted at the last meeting, and we are all glad of it, for he is a natural soldier, as well as a first-class umpire.”

“I remember his father well ; he was a brave soldier, and died bravely in the war,” said the Deacon.

This remark set Brownny to thinking again, and he was glad he had not asked Tuffy to umpire a ball game on the day that meant so much to him and his widowed mother and her fatherless children.

When Saturday came the memorial exercises were loyally and earnestly entered into by the old and young of both villages, with full ranks of Veterans and Loyal Sons bearing wreaths and flowers, led by a band of music, and waving flags, the sight of which made every heart beat a little fuller and faster than on other days.

One of the proudest features of the procession was Bunnyboy’s second platoon of the Hustlers and the other squad from Brownny’s nine, all in their tidy uniforms of blue

and gray, sharing gladly in paying this beautiful annual tribute to those who, years before, had given or risked their lives for their country's honor and their country's flag.

On the following Wednesday the weather was fine, and the Rangers gave up their parade to let the Hustlers and the Terrace nines play their championship game, with both teams in full uniform for the first time.

Brownny was very sanguine the Terrace nine would win the pennant, but Cousin Jack tried to temper his confidence by remarking that the best side ought to win, and, barring accidents, probably would.

Brownny claimed that his nine were the best players, and gave Cousin Jack a chance to cool him down again by saying: "That remains to be seen, Brownny. Brag is a loud talker, but rarely wins in a close contest. Keep Brag out of your game and play ball for all you are worth."

"That is what we are going to do," said Brownny; "you wait and see!"

"Well, well," answered Cousin Jack, "you have my best wishes, but it is a good time to remember that whichever side wins the other side can save its honor by bearing defeat gracefully and bravely. Go in and win if you can."

Brownny's nine did "play for all they were worth," and at the opening of the ninth inning led the score by a single run.

When the "Terrors" went to bat for the last time, Brin-

dle looked very determined as he stepped to his place in the pitcher's' box and sternly called out to his team, "Now play ball!"

Brindle set the example by doing his best, sending the ball curving in and out, over and under, in a most baffling way, until, in spite of all their skill, Brownny's batters were put out in one, two, three order, without scoring another run.

Then the Hustlers went to bat, with the score still standing one in favor of the "Terrors."

Chivy Woodchuck and Brownny worked well together, and succeeded in retiring two of Brindle's best players before his own turn came.

When Brindle grasped the ash bat there was a hush, followed by a wild yell from his side as he sent the first ball flying far over the pasture, out of the reach of the nimblest fielders, and scored a home run.

Tumblekins Coon next took his place at bat and both Brownny and Chivy thought they had an easy victim, even if he should get a base on balls.

Tumblekins was more chubby than graceful, inclined to be heedless and clumsy, and was not regarded as an expert base runner. Still there was a fire-like flash in his eyes as he watched Chivy's every motion. At last came a swift, low ball. In a twinkling a sky-roarer went whizzing over the shortstop, and before the left-fielder could return the ball

Tumblekins had done his grand roll-up-and-tumble-up-slide act, landing at the home plate on all fours and winning the game for the Hustlers.

Brindle helped Tumblekins to his feet, brushed off the sand from his new uniform and gave him a bear-like hug, while the pasture rang with the shouts of the Hustlers and a sympathizing crowd of spectators. The result was so



THAT FAMOUS PLAY.

unexpected that even the Terrace players joined in the shouting when Tumblekins went down in a heap over the home plate.

Cousin Jack hastened to shake hands with Tumblekins, and to congratulate Brindle upon the Hustlers' victory, not forgetting a word of praise to Brownly for the well-played game by his side. Brownly was disappointed, but shook

hands with Brindle, saying frankly that the pennant had been fairly won.

Both nines were then invited by the Deacon, who "happened to be passing by," he said, to come over to the Terrace lawn and have a lemonade lunch, which Mother Bunny had kindly prepared for the tired and thirsty players and their umpire Tuffy Bear, whose decisions had been accepted without a "kick" from the beginning to the close of the game.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION BALL GAME.

THE bunnies were fond of having secrets of their own, or being a part of some quiet plan for giving pleasure to others.

It was a dull week in the village when there was not some kind of a secret or pleasant surprise for some one, mixed up with their work or play.

One of Mother Bunny's home precepts was that good deeds and even kind thoughts were "catching," like the measles or whooping-cough, and were liable to "break out" in very strange ways and places, especially in a neighborly community like Runwild Terrace.

Tumblekins Coon became the hero of the hour after his "home run," which won the championship for the Hustlers, and though he was an orphan, and still lived at the "Home," where he made himself useful in various ways, he had won many friends by his happy and obliging disposition.

Tumblekins had always been clumsy and heedless, and

it was a standing joke among his play-fellows that he could fall over himself, or anything else that chanced to be in his way, more times in a day than a circus clown.

In spite of this habit of thoughtlessness for himself, he could, and often did, think of others, in a way that proved he was both bright and kind-hearted.

While the Hustlers and the Terrace nine were rejoicing in the glory of their uniforms, Tumblekins was the first to remember that Tuffy Bear had given a good deal of time and hard work for both teams, but had not been "arrayed like one of these," nor rewarded in any special way.

It was an open secret among Tuffy's friends that he was trying to save enough, from the small share of his earnings which he kept for himself, to buy a safety bicycle.

One day Cousin Jack was surprised by a call from Tumblekins, who said he had a secret which he wished Cousin Jack to manage.

Cousin Jack, as usual, lent a willing ear, while Tumblekins confided to him a plan for an exhibition game by the ball teams, for Tuffy's benefit.

"Charge an admission fee to the pasture, and let us sell tickets in advance, and we can make a million!" said the enthusiastic Tumblekins.

This pleased Cousin Jack, who said he would propose the exhibition game to the nines, and would cheerfully help on the plan if they consented to play.

To increase the interest by making a mystery of the use to be made of the gate receipts, Cousin Jack and Tumblekins agreed to keep that part of the plan a secret between themselves, by simply saying that the receipts were to be given away by a joint vote of the two nines, to be taken at the close of the game.

Both captains and their teams were delighted with the scheme, and an early date was fixed for the game. Brownny and Brindle then held a special meeting in Deacon Bunny's library to write a notice of the event, to be printed and used as a poster.



WRITING THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

After an hour of hard thinking, and scribbling, spoiling a quire or more of the Deacon's letter paper, they sent for Cousin Jack, and with faces glowing with pride and satisfaction they asked him to read the document and have it printed for them at once.

Cousin Jack carefully read the boldly written lines, and taking a blue pencil from his pocket, began to make broad marks through many of the words they had used.

"What are you doing?" anxiously inquired Brownny.

"Trying to simplify the statement without spoiling the sense, and to save the reputation of this family for modesty."

“What is the matter with it?” asked Brownly. “Don’t you think it will look well on the bill-boards?”

“It is a little early in the season for circus literature, and last year’s posters are out of date,” replied Cousin Jack. “This notice has some good points which we can retain and at the same time save considerable good printer’s ink. See what you think of the bill now, with the circus style of eloquence left out.”

Handing the sheet to the captains, Cousin Jack watched their faces as they read the revised edition, which now presented a ludicrous medley of words and erasures.

Bunny sighed deeply as he looked up from the much-erased notice, and pathetically remarked, “You have taken all the stuffing out of it!”

“That is what I tried to do,” replied Cousin Jack. “If it was a Thanksgiving turkey, or a saw-dust doll, stuffing might improve it, but in a simple notice to our friends and neighbors, about ourselves, such ‘stuffing’ is worse than useless, and in bad taste, to say nothing of the strain upon the imagination.”

Then, to make the lesson easier for them, Cousin Jack good-naturedly added: “Well, well; you need not be discouraged; you followed your public models very closely, and to make up for the loss of the big boastful words we will have the modest and truthful notice which remains printed on large sheets of yellow paper, in blue ink, and per-

haps the village folk will think the circus is coming, all the same."

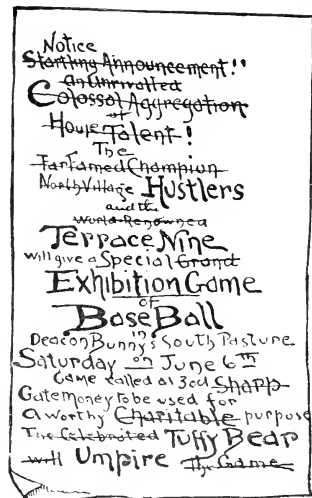
Brownly and Brindle laughed and agreed to the changes, but asked why Cousin Jack had put the blue lines through the words "sharp," and "charitable."

"'Three o'clock P. M.' means '3 o'clock' and not a minute after," replied Cousin Jack, "and the word 'sharp' would

seem to imply that you were in the habit of being behind-time, which, of course, is not true, in baseball engagements."

"Charitable," he continued, "is a good word in the right place, but is sometimes out of place, as in this instance, which you will discover when the vote is taken to dispose of the receipts."

Turning to Brownly, he added: "I am surprised that a deacon's son should forget that 'Charity vaunteth itself not.'"



THE CORRECTED ANNOUNCEMENT.

"I see the point," answered Brownly with a mischievous smile, "and I think we will rewrite the notice before father

comes in, or he will be tacking on another Sunday-school lesson to this poor, scratched-out ball poster. This is a hard world to get used to, isn't it, Brindle?"

Brindle nodded assent and grinned, while Cousin Jack replied for him, "Cheer up, Brownny; you may live to be a 'colossal aggregation of home talent' yourself, if you try to improve all these opportunities, which I am the humble means of bringing to your notice, from time to time.

"Bring me a plainly written copy in the morning," he added, "and I will have it printed so gorgeously in yellow and blue that you will feel like waking up in the night to admire a premature sunrise."

"All right, Cousin Jack," said Brownny, "we are satisfied, and are just as much obliged as we can be for your help. The show is bound to be' a success, don't you think so?"

"Of course I do, for I am in the secret and you are not," answered Cousin Jack, as he left them to rewrite the substitute for the "Startling Announcement."

The poster was printed; the day came, and the game was played with great spirit before a large gathering of villagers, who had bought reserved seats on the grass and rocks under the old red oak, and also a larger crowd of spectators who enjoyed the game and shouted with as good will as the more fortunate ones who were able to pay for admission to the grand stand up, or sit down accommodations inside the bars of the south pasture.

At the close of the game the Terrace nine had scored the most runs and the fewest errors, which partly consoled them for the lost championship.

When the players had assembled under the old oak, Cousin Jack made a short speech, giving the credit for the scheme to Tumblekins, and stating the plan, and some of the reasons, for presenting the receipts from the sale of tickets to their faithful and willing umpire, Tuffy Bear.

The secret was out, and the proposition was received with shouts of approval, the vote was unanimous, and Tumblekins was selected to make the presentation speech then and there.

The receipts, which amounted to a goodly sum, had been changed into shining silver pieces by Cousin Jack, who handed the small but well-filled purse—a gift from Pink-eyes—to Tumblekins, and said, “Now do your duty!”

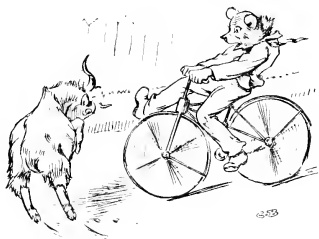
Tumblekins stepped forward, purse in hand, but in his excitement stumbled over a loose stone, and fell sprawling at the blushing Tuffy’s feet. The mishap made the players laugh, and Tumblekins was so overcome that he forgot the nice little speech he had intended making, but managed to say, somewhat awkwardly: “Here are the shekels, Tuffy, and you have earned them. We all wish you good-luck and hope you will buy a safety bicycle to-morrow, and—and—let’s give three cheers for Tuffy Bear.”

The cheers were given, and Tuffy, who was the most sur-

prised member of the party, made a bow and simply said: "I thank you all very much. You are all good fellows, and I am proud to be your friend and umpire. I didn't expect to be paid for doing the thing I like to do better than anything in my line, but I am getting used to surprises.

"There doesn't seem to be any end to the kind things some folks are doing for us all in this village, and I notice that Jack Bunny has a hand in about all that goes on to make it pleasant for us. He is a friend worth having and I wish you would all help me to give three rousing cheers for Jack Bunny, and three more for Tumblekins, who is trying to learn Jack Bunny's trade of being everybody's friend."

"One! Hip! Hip! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" rang out the cheers, and the closing exercises of the grand exhibition game were over.





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